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ABSTRACT

The 17th century Dutch colony of New Netherland, which was located between New England in the north and Maryland and Virginia in the south, has received little attention from most historians of colonial America. The New Netherland Project was formed in 1974 under the sponsorship of the New York State Library and the Holland Society of New York City. The project's goals are to translate and publish the thousands of pages of official Dutch records now held by the New York State Archives, State Library, and local repositories. The translation and publication of these records are providing researchers with the source material necessary for a balanced assessment of the Dutch impact in North America. This publication provides background information on the project, copies of two Dutch colonial documents that have been transcribed and translated, articles and reviews about the project, letters of support, and a list of project donors. (DB)

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State of New York

Executive Chamber

This is to certify that the pen hereunto affixed commemorates the approval of Senate Bill Number 8779, by Senator Nolan; and in Assembly by Member of Assembly Hoyt, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to designating New Netherland day"

Became a law July twenty-fifth, being Chapter 807 of the Laws of 1990.

G I V E N under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-fifth day of July in the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety.

BY THE GOVERNOR

Secretary to the Governor

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New Netherland Project

A translation program sponsored by
the New York State Library

Funded by matching grants from
the National Endowment for the Humanities

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New Netherland Project

The 17th-century colony of New Netherland extended from the Connecticut River to Delaware Bay. The colony's location between New England in the north and Maryland and Virginia in the south brought it into direct conflict with English interests in North America. The existence of New Netherland, from Hudson's explorations in 1609 to the final relinquishing of control to the English in 1674, spanned approximately two-thirds of a century of Dutch activity in this important central region, while the influence of Dutch culture continued into the nineteenth century.

Most histories of early colonial America either dismiss New Netherland in a few lines or rely on English sources which portray the Dutch colony from an enemy's viewpoint. Dutch sources have been inaccessible because of lack of translations for the mass of materials which survive from New Netherland, while many of the existing translations are unreliable.

In 1974, the New Netherland Project was formed under the sponsorship of the New York State Library and the Holland Society of New York City. Four volumes of Dutch records, which had been translated at the beginning of the century, but through lack of funds never printed, were published by the Holland Society. The publication of these volumes generated interest in having the remaining 10,000 pages of official records of New Netherland translated and available in print, together with numerous volumes of local records. By 1992 the Project had translated, edited, and published another 14 volumes with several more in production.

The translation and publication of these records are providing researchers with the source material necessary for a balanced assessment of the Dutch impact in North America. These new resources have already contributed greatly to increased understanding and knowledge in such diverse fields as agricultural history, anthropology, archaeology, genealogy, African–American history, criminal justice, and economics. It is the goal of the New Netherland Project to translate all the Dutch manuscripts now held by the New York State Archives, State Library, and local repositories.

Project Programs

The primary objective of the New Netherland Project is to continue the translation and publication of the series *New Netherland Documents*. When completed the series will contain 24 volumes of official manuscripts, edited, annotated and indexed for use by researchers. The Project will also continue to publish translations of related volumes of records of local governments and institutions.

The Project will continue its policy of collecting copies of Dutch manuscripts held by other repositories in the United States and abroad in order to centralize this primary source material in the New York State Library.

Since 1979, the Project has sponsored annually the Rensselaerswijck Seminar, which focuses on various topics relating to the history of New Netherland and colonial New York. The Project also publishes selected papers from these seminars.

Evening courses to give adult students facility in the reading and interpreting colonial Dutch manuscripts will be offered at the Albany Institute of History and Art or the College of St. Rose.

The Project responds to reference questions related to research on New Netherland and colonial New York. The Project functions as a clearing house for news on New Netherland research, and publishes, at irregular intervals, an English language newsletter, *De Nieu Nederlanse Marcurius*.

The New Netherland Project is closely involved in production of another series *New York Historical Manuscripts (NYHM)*, which specializes in records of New York's English government in the 17th century. The Project has provided translations of hundreds of Dutch documents for books in the English government records series.

Both NNP and NYHM had their origins in the Committee on Publication of New York Historical Manuscripts, composed of persons from various historical backgrounds, and formed in 1973 to encourage the publication of New York's Dutch and English records from the first settlement of New Netherland to the conclusion of Leisler's Rebellion in 1691. Of central importance to both series, *New Netherland Documents* and *New York Historical Manuscripts*, are the "New York Colonial Manuscripts" in the New York State Archives, which include many (but not all) of the New Netherland and provincial New York government archives. Other records of interest are those of local governments, individuals, and churches.

Project Staff

Charles T. Gehring, translator and editor of the *New Netherland Documents* and director of the Project, has a Ph.D. in Germanic Linguistics from Indiana University.

Nancy McClure Zeller, assistant to the translator, has a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages from the University of Texas at Austin. She serves the Project as financial developer, editor, program planner and researcher.

Janny Venema, assistant to the translator, was a teacher of Dutch and history in Haarlem, the Netherlands. She serves the Project as a transcriber and researcher.

Martha Dickinson Shattuck, assistant to the translator, is writing her dissertation on law and society in New Netherland. She serves the Project as researcher and editorial assistant.

New York Historical Manuscripts Staff

Peter R. Christoph, editor of *New York Historical Manuscripts*, was the New York State Library's curator of manuscripts and other historical collections for nearly 20 years.

Florence A. Christoph, editor of *New York Historical Manuscripts*, works with the Project by arrangement with the Holland Society of New York. She is also a certified genealogist.

Works in Print

Beginning in 1989, titles in both the Dutch and English series are being published by Syracuse University Press. Earlier volumes were issued by other publishers, but Syracuse has acquired the back stock of all volumes, except for four out-of-print titles and the *Curaçao Papers*.

The following books can now be ordered from Syracuse University Press, 1600 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13244–5160.

The Andros Papers: 1674–1676
The Andros Papers: 1677–1678
The Andros Papers: 1679–1680
Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York, 1664–1673
Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York, 1674–1688
Council Minutes, 1652–1654
Delaware Papers (Dutch Period), 1648–1664
Delaware Papers (English Period), 1664–1682

Fort Orange Court Minutes, 1652–1660
Kingston Papers, 1661–1675 (2 volumes)
Land Papers, 1630–1664
Minutes of the Mayor's Court of New York, 1674–1675
Nicolls and Lovelace Papers, 1664–1673
Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, NY, 1660–1752
Ordinances and Writs of Appeal, 1647–1674
Records of New Amsterdam (7 volumes)

Available directly from the Project for $5.00 is Charles Gehring's *Guide to Dutch Manuscripts in U.S. Repositories.*

Works in Progress

Correspondence, 1646–1653 (scheduled for 1994)
Council Minutes, 1655–1656 (forthcoming 1993)
Council Minutes, 1668–1688 (not yet scheduled)
Notarial Records of Beverwijck and Albany, 1654–1679 (scheduled for 1995)

Sources of Financial Support

Since the inception of the New Netherland Project in 1974, financial support has come from various sources. After being funded for the first year by the State of New York, the Project was continued for two years by grants from the New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, private corporations and foundations. In 1977 the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) awarded the project a one-year grant to compile a guide to Dutch manuscripts relating to New Netherland.

The Project is currently supported by the latest of several challenge grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The matching funds for these grants have come from numerous individuals, corporations and foundations. In 1986 and 1987 the New York State Legislature provided state funding to match the NEH grant for the first time since the Project's inception.

The New Netherland Project has survived because of the broad base of financial support generated by interest in the Dutch records. If this interest is maintained in the future, then the translations will proceed until all documents held by the New York State Archives are published. Donations in any amount are fully tax deductible and will be matched by NEH. To contribute make your check payable to the New Netherland Project or the Regents Research Fund of the University of the State of New York and mail to: New Netherland Project, New York State Library, CEC 8th Floor, Albany, NY 12230; (518) 474–6067.

Rensselaerswijck Seminar

An ancillary activity of the New Netherland Project is the annual Rensselaerswijck Seminar. Held the third Saturday of September since 1979, the seminar has attracted a significant number of historians, researchers, genealogists, and general public. The participants, including scholars of international repute, come from several states and foreign countries to attend these interesting and informative lectures.

Topics for these seminars have been: "Crime and Punishment in New Netherland," "Dutch Agriculture and Farm-Related Industries," "Hudson Valley Families," "Blacks in New Netherland and Colonial New York," "Historical Archeology," "Education in New Netherland and the Middle Colonies," "Merchants and Traders of New Netherland and Early New York," "Dutch Foundations of Albany," "A New Netherland Hutspot," "Domestic Life in New Netherland," "The Age of Leisler," "New Netherland and the Frontier," and "The Persistence of the Dutch after 1664."

A 400-page, indexed collection of 31 papers from the first ten seminars was published in 1991; its title is *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*. The book is being sold for $19.50 + $2.50 postage & handling by the Friends group; proceeds will fund future publications.

Friends of the New Netherland Project

Formed in 1986, this group supports the Project by publicity, activities and special events, fundraising, and administering an annual manuscript prize, the Hendricks Manuscript Award. Membership benefits include a subscription to the Project newsletter and discounts on Project publications. To join send annual dues of $25.00 to the Friends of the New Netherland Project, P.O. Box 2536 Empire State Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220–0536.

Hendricks Manuscript Award

The Friends of the New Netherland Project administer the annual Hendricks Manuscript Award, endowed by Andrew A. Hendricks of North Carolina in 1987. Income from the endowment is used to promote and stimulate research in the area of New Netherland studies by offering an annual prize of at least $1000 for the best published or unpublished manuscript focusing on any aspect of the Dutch colonial experience in North America.

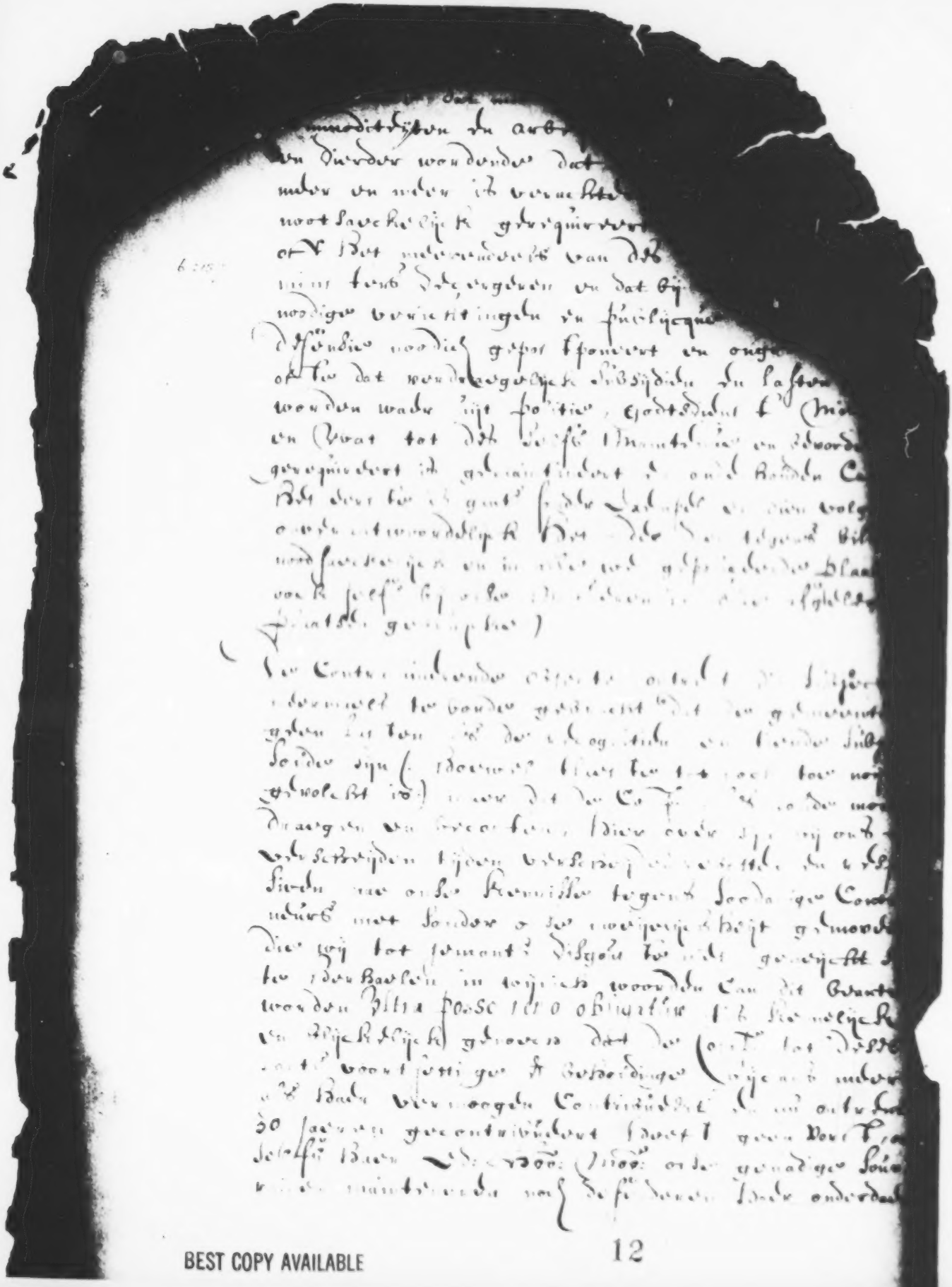
Cover Design

The mariners' map of New Netherland on the cover is taken from Pieter Goos *De Zee-Atlas Ofte Water-Weereld*, Texel 1667. The GWC logo on the title page was the monogram of the Dutch West India Company, representing the first letters of *Geoctroyeerde Westindische Compagnie*, i.e., "Chartered West India Company."

The Dutch Colonial Manuscripts

The "Dutch Colonial Manuscripts," some 12,000 pages of handwritten manuscripts from the New Netherland period, are housed in the New York State Archives and form the core of the translations of the New Netherland Project.

The following are photostats of two documents from the collections of the New York State Archives and of Manuscripts and Special Collections of the New York State Library and opposite the photostats are side-by-side transcription and translation of the document.



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Petrus Stuyvesant on Taxation

The following excerpt is from Council Minutes 1655–1656, document [6:151]. Dated November 10, 1655 it reflects the financial difficulties in New Netherland as a result of a disasterous Indian attack two months earlier. Stuyvesant proposed that they begin to pay their own way by a series of new taxes. Empty braces indicate damaged or lost text.

De contraminerende objecten ontrent dit subject meermaels te korde gebracht dat de gemeenten geen lasten als de recognitien en tiende subject soude sijn (: hoewel tlaeste tot noch toe noijt gevolcht is :) maer dat de Comp: alles soude moeten draegen en becosten, Hier over sijn bij ons ten verwcheijden tijden verscheijden debatten en responsiven nae onse kennisse tegens soodanige contrameurs niet sonder onse moeijelijckheijt gemoveert die wij tot iemants disgonste niet geneycht sijn te herhaelen in wijnich woorden can dit beantwoort worden ultra posse nemo obligatur tis kennelijck en blijckelijck genoech dat de Comp: tot deses lants voortsettinge behoudinge bijcans meer als haer vermoogen contribueert en nu ontrent 30 jaeren gecontribueert heeft geen Vorst, oock selfs haer ed: Hoo: Moo: onse genadige souverainen mainteneren noch defenderen haer onderdaenen
[several lines lost]
[ ] onderdaenen eerst g[ ]
[ ] object raeckende de onver[ ]
[ ] ingesetenen om eenige lasten te [ ]
[ ]egen, beantwoort meede hem selfs nae [ ]
sjpreeckwoort daer niet is verliest den keijser sij recht is in ons vaderlant practicabel dat alle Godts huijsen ende die vande aelmoesen leven exempt sijn vande impositien ende lasten ende onredelijck dattet vande soodanige hier te lande soude geeijscht worden efter de pracht in cleedinge de consumtpien in dranck Gevocht van leedich ganck en luijheijt oock soo dat men qualijck een arbeijder voor een redelijck dagloon can becomen presupponeren geensins onvermoogentlheijt om tot de gemeene saecke iets te connen geven maer veel eer een quaetwillicheijt geredondeert uijt een ongebonden off ingebeelde ofte wijsgemaeckte vrijheijt in een (: gelijck sommige sustineren :) Nieu ende vrijlant gaeve Godt dattet vrij waere van pracht en overdaet en daerom te min excuijsabel van niet te contribueeren tottet gemeene beste t'welcke niet min billick [ ] noodich sijnde en des niet tegenstaende met geen gemeen consent connende geobtineert worden, resteert mijns crachtens niet anders (: ten sij wij ons der heeren patronen reproche van alte groote timiditeijt willen onderwerpen :) als eenige lasten op de fatsoenlijckste maniere selfs te ordonneren ende in te voeren en voor eerst de soodanige waer over wij der welgedachte heeren approbatie en ordere hebben, te weeten:

The counter arguments to this subject, which have been brought up many times, are that the commonalties be subject to no taxes except the recognition fees and the tenths (although the latter has never been obeyed as of yet), but that the company must bear the expense of everything. We have been moved at various times to debate and respond to such proponents to the best of our knowledge and not without difficulty, which, to avoid displeasure, we are not inclined to repeat. In a few words the response can be: *ultra posse nemo obligatur* [Latin: no one needs to do more than he can]. It is sufficiently known and apparent that the company contributes almost more than its capacity for this country's improvement and maintenance, and now for nearly 30 years no prince has contributed; even their honorable high mightinesses, our merciful sovereigns neither maintain nor defend their subjects [ ]
[ ] subjects first [ ]
[ ] object concerning the inability [ ]
[ ] settlers to [ ] any taxes [ ]
[ ] answers itself according to the proverb: "Where there is nothing, the emperor loses his rights." And it is the practise in our fatherland that all of God's houses and those who live from alms are exempt from fees and taxes; and it is unreasonable that it be requested of such in this country. Yet ostentation in clothing and consumption of drink is followed by indolence and sloth, so that one can hardly find a worker for a reasonable daily wage, inferring in no way incapacity to be able to give something to general affairs, but rather a malevolence, stemming from a dissolute or fancied or persuaded freedom in a (as some claim) new and free land. Would to God that it were free from ostentation and excess, and therefore, less excusable not to contribute to the general welfare, which is no less equitable than necessary, and notwithstanding it cannot be obtained by common consent, in my opinion there is no other recourse (unless we want to subject ourselves to the reproach of the lords patroons for being too timid) than to order and implement some taxes ourselves in the most fitting manner possible; and initially [institute] those taxes for which we have the aforesaid lords' approval and order, namely:

[illegible] Anno 1647 [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Whales sighted at Fort Orange

The following entries were found in the memorandum book of Antony de Hooges, secretary of the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck. The whale sightings must have created quite a stir because it is extremely rare to find such accounts preserved among mundane business records. As you read these accounts keep in mind that Herman Melville could trace his ancestry back to New Netherland through the Gansevoort family in his maternal line, and that Petrus Stuyvesant arrived in New Netherland as the new director general in May of 1647. The memorandum book is in box 31 of the "Van Rensselaer Manor Papers" held by Manuscripts and Special Collections of the New York State Library.

[52] Den 29en Marty Anno 1647 heeft sich voor ons alhier inde Colonie een seeckere Vis vertoont, die naer wij houden bemercken van een sonderlinge grootte was; hij quam van beneden, ende swom een stuck weechs voorbij ons naer boven tot aende droochte ende quam tegen den avont wederom voorbij ons naer beneeden passeeren. Hij was snee-wit, sonder vinnen, rondt van lijff, blies waetter boven uyt sijn hooft, gelijck de walvisschen ofte tonijns. Het docht ons heel vreemt, uyt oorsaeck, dat boven dat tusschen ons ende de Manhatans veele droochten sijn, ende daer beneven sneewit was, soodanige onser geen oijt heeft gesien, dat, segge ick, hij het varsche waetter is gepasseert boven de spatie van 20 mijlen, sijnde het varsche waetter het soutte contrarie, dat gelijck als haer element is. Wat het sij, Godt de Heere weet het, dit staet vast, ick, ende meest alle de I[nwoonders] hebben het met groote verwondering ae[ngesien] op de selve stondt, dat dese vis hem voor ons vi[nt] hadden wij de eerste donder ende blixen van dit jaer

[52] On the 29th of March in the year 1647 a certain fish appeared before us here in the colony, which we estimated to be of a considerable size. He came from below and swam past us a certain distance up to the sand bars and came back towards evening, going down past us again. He was snow-white, without fins, round of body, and blew water up out of his head, just like whales or tunas. It seemed very strange to us because there are many sand bars between us and Manhattan, and also because it was snow-white, such as no one among us has ever seen; especially, I say, because it covered a distance of 20 [Dutch] miles of fresh water in contrast to salt water, which is its element. Only God knows what it means. But it is certain, that I and most all of the inhabitants [watched] it with great amazement. On the same evening that this fish appeared before us, we had the first thunder and lightening of the year.

[53] Den 19 Aprilis anno 1647 met dit hooch [waetter] vertoonde sich wederom omtrent de middach een Vis (wiert geoordeelt van zeevaerende Luyden, die op Groenlandt hadden gevaeren een Walvis te [sijn)] alhier voort Fort Orangien, was van meerdere grootte als de voorno[emde] was bruyn van coleur gelijck een [ ] met grootte vinnen op de ruch, blie[s] waetter uyt het hooft als de voorig[e.] Hij swom tegen dese extraordinary afw[aette]ringe naer bovene. Dit dunckt mij vreemt, doordien hett voordesen over eenig[e] Jaeren is geschiet, dat sich alhier een Tonijn heeft vertoont, twelck haer te di[ ] tijdt groot wonder gaff, hoe de Vis soo verre verseylt was, ende m[ ] in dit eene voorjaer sich 2 soodaen[ige] grootte visschen vertoonen, [dat] ongehoort is, om reeden, als vande vo[ornoemde] Vis verhaelt is.
[In the margin is written:] Wij achten dat hij over de 40 voeten lank was.

[53] On the 19th of April in the year 1647 another fish appeared here around noon before Fort Orange with the high water (seafaring men who have sailed to Greenland judged it to be a whale). It was of considerable size as the previous one (we thought it to be over 40 feet long). It was brown in color like a [ ] with large fins on its back and blew water out of its head like the one before. He swam upstream against this extraordinary current. It seemed strange to me because it has been several years since a tuna has appeared here. It caused great amazement how the fish had swum so far and [ ] in this spring two such large fish should appear, [ ] is unheard of, for reasons stated about the previous fish.

Articles and Reviews

Story of the New Netherland Project

by Peter Christoph

De Halve Maen, Vol. lxi, No. 3 (September 1988)

Eighteen years ago when I became curator of historical manuscripts at the New York State Library, I found it frustrating to have in my custody tens of thousands of ancient Dutch documents that nobody could read. The first problem of course is the language. There just are not many people in this country who read Dutch. And those who can read the modern language discover very quickly that the 17th century language was significantly different. To use an example from English, most of us do not easily read 17th century literature, such as Shakespeare, or the King James Bible, without checking the footnotes and the commentaries frequently. Imagine reading a document from that period with no footnotes to help you.

"Dutch Colonial Manuscripts" Vol. 2, p. 46: Register of Provincial Secretary.

A second problem is handwriting. Handwriting styles change greatly over time. I could show you 17th century English documents, written neatly by professional scribes, that most English-speaking people cannot read and that at first glance they might not even recognize as English. A similar problem holds true with Dutch documents. Most modern Dutchmen cannot read 17th century documents because they cannot decipher the handwriting.

Now there were frequent attempts in the 19th century by people who knew Dutch, more or less, to translate the records. They did not have much in the line of dictionaries to help them out. The unabridged Dutch dictionary was not begun until 1882, and today—a hundred-five years and 23 volumes later—it is still not complete. But at least we have most of the dictionary: the 19th century translators had almost none of it. There were other reasons why 19th century translations were largely unsatisfactory, in some cases because the translators did not know Dutch very well, in other cases because they were not proficient in English. But this did not stop them from publishing their translations.

Most of the older translations in print are really dreadful, often missing the sense of a document, sometimes making it say the exact opposite of what was intended, which has had a very bad effect on the writing of New York colonial history. Further distorting the record is the fact that many historians have relied heavily on information about New Netherland that they found in the colonial records of New England. But the colonial New Englanders hated the Dutch passionately, they never had anything good to say about them, so that the records used by historians have completely prejudiced the writing of American history against the New Netherland government. We might note, for instance, that the Peter Stuyvesant we find in the Dutch records is nothing like the ogre of American history; rather, he is young, energetic, a good administrator, and a shrewd negotiator and diplomat who usually got the better of Yankee officials. The reason he was forced to surrender New Netherland to the British army was not because he was unpopular and had no support among his own people.

The colony was indefensible, with the British army on one side and the New England militia on the other side. The deal he was offered by the British commander was that if he surrendered peacefully, Manhattan would be occupied by British regulars, who were under orders not to harm any civilian on pain of death. The New Englanders wer eunder no such orders. Stuyvesant was a soldier and proposed fighting to the last man, but his Council said to him, "Who will protect our families if we're all dead and the New Englanders get in here; they'll plunder our houses and rape our wives and daughters." That is why Stuyvesant surrendered—to protect the people from Yankee thieves and rapists—but you'll never read that in anything written by a New England historian. That's why I say that a great deal of New York's colonial history as it is written is pure nonsense.

When I began working in the State Library's manuscripts room I found that one of our least known treasures was a translation by A.J.F. van Laer of the first four volumes of the records of New Netherland. It was an excellent translation—van Laer was fluent in both Dutch and English, and he had a knack for translating, which not everybody who speaks two languages can do well. The translation had been sitting on a shelf for 50 years. I thought it was high time to publish it, but nobody influential in state government agreed with me, so it seemed likely it would stay on the shelf.

One fateful day in 1972 I was visited at the library by Professor Kenneth Scott, who has edited some 40 volumes of historical records. He was looking around for a new project and wondered if I had any suggestions. I did. I asked him if

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he would be interested in seeing an unpublished translation by A.J.F. van Laer: 2,000 pages of the records of New Netherland. Dr. Scott was excited by the possibilities, to put it mildly; that weekend he and I were attending the Second New Netherland Conference at Rensselaerville, sponsored by The Holland Society. Dr. Scott got up at the conference and made a pitch for getting the four volumes published. The chairman of the Publications Committee at that time was Ralph DeGroff, Sr., who was intrigued with the idea. At the end of the conference, he gathered Dr. Scott and me and some other people together—I don't remember who all—and we discussed what needed to be done to get the books published. Mr. DeGroff personally oversaw the project. After that, he encouraged us to locate other existing translations, which resulted in Drs. Scott and Stryker-Rodda and myself editing Dingman Versteeg's translation of the early records of the town of Kingston, again funded by The Holland Society.

We were looking around for more material, when one day at a historical conference I met Charles Gehring, who had a doctorate in Germanic linguistics and was looking for a position, preferably something connected with his specialty: the colonial Dutch language. I thought I might have something that would interest him. The only problem was that I had no money to hire him, and could not convince anyone in authority in state government that this was an opportunity not to be lost.

So I went back to Ralph DeGroff at The Holland Society. He got in touch with another member, Cortland van Rensselaer Schuyler, who had supervised the building the Empire State Plaza at Albany for Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Gen. Schuyler brought Mr. DeGroff and Mr. Rockefeller together, and although Rockefeller was no longer governor, he put in a call to the head of the State Bureau of the Budget and I suddenly found myself blessed with enough state money to hire myself a translator for a year.

That was 14 years ago, and Dr. Gehring has been at the State Library ever since. In that time he has translated nine manuscript volumes: twelve more remain to be done. We hope by the end of the century to have all the records of the government of New Netherland translated and published.

For the first 12 years I was unable to get Dr. Gehring on the state payroll, and had to pay him out of gifts and grants and bake sales. I wangled half a year's salary out of the New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, three grants from the Wilson Publishing Co., I don't know how many gifts from The Holland Society, a year's grant from the National Historical Publications and Research Commission, and nine years of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In between, there were some times when things looked pretty grim for Dr. Gehring. Once I was within two hours of having to lay him off when I received word that a gift was coming in that was good for three months' salary.

Things don't get quite that tight, anymore, and one change in our fortunes is a peculiar story in itself. What happened was that three years ago State Assemblyman William Hoyt from Buffalo expressed an interest in seeing what the State Library had on polar exploration. It is a rare thing for a Legislator to indicate that he would like to visit the Library personally so we dug out everything we had on polar expeditions, which is quite a bit, actually, and we threw in a tour of the building. Along the way he was shown where the translating was being done, and he was so interested that he came back a couple of weeks later to talk with Dr. Gehring and learn more about the project. He couldn't do anything directly for us, because we don't live in his district, but he mentioned the project to Albany's legislators, and the upshot of it was that at budget time they remembered us with a legislative grant in 1986 and again in 1987. That, together with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, will pay the salaries of Dr. Gehring and his two assistants for the next two years. That's very nice, because it means we can spend our time transcribing and translating instead of fund raising. One assistant, Nancy Zeller, who has a doctorate in German literature—has taken over most of the fundraising, the office work, organizing meetings and conferences, and most importantly, getting the typescripts in shape for publication. The other assistant is Janny Venema, a young Dutch woman married to an American; in her homeland she was a history teacher. Her work with the project includes transcribing the documents to make translation easier, preparing indexes, and currently she is preparing a map of the original property owners in Albany in 1652 and 1653. She hopes to do a new translation of the first book of Albany Records, since the existing translation has long been out of print, and wasn't very good in the first place.

The English seized control of the colony in 1664, but one does not go to bed a Dutchman Thursday night, and get up an Englishman Friday morning. The records from the early years of the English government contain a great many documents in Dutch, and though the number decreases with time, they remain a significant portion of the records even a quarter century later. The Holland Society early on encouraged us not to limit our efforts just to the period of Dutch government, but to translate and edit later materials as well. However, we felt we should agree on some sort of limit as to how far we would go, and finally settled on Leisler's rebellion as a cutoff point, since that was, at least arguably, the final administration of the colony by Dutch nationals.

There are all sorts of challenges and problems. Some people did not write very well, and some wrote very badly. A petition written by someone who does not have occasion to write anything from one year to the next is usually not a well written document. On the other end of the social scale, but no more readable, was Governor Sir Edmund Andros, who had the peculiar habit of writing with a blunt piece of lead, or maybe it was a musket ball, and sometimes he used some sort of a red crayon. It can take a couple of hours to figure out one sentence in his handwriting. Fortunately, he didn't write much. Paper being scarce and expensive, people tended to crowd their words together, and crowd the lines together, and then write between the lines, which is not helpful. There were no spelling rules back then—the first English dictionary did not come along until a century later, so most people had their own personal spelling rules, and some seem to use no rules at all. You will often find the same word spelled three or four different ways on the same page. You don't always have much to go by when the handwriting is bad and the spelling is inconsistent.

Further compounding the problems are various sorts of damage to the documents. At one time all the documents dealing with Indian land titles on Long Island were bundled together, and some thoughtless rodent ate a hole right through the middle of the bundle, so that all those documents are lacking a chunk right out of the center.

A fire at the State Capitol in 1911 destroyed many pages of documents, and singed the edges of many others. Often what we have is an oval, a page with the corners and edges

burned away. This is a great problem in the Dutch records as well—it is not easy to translate a sentence with the subject missing, or the verb, or both. Yet somehow we manage to overcome the obstacles and get the books published. So far, the Dutch and English record projects together have published 18 books in 16 years.

In addition to the translation and transcription projects, we have several other related activities. Dr. Gehring spent one year compiling records of all documents of the Dutch period located at American institutions, and he has published a guide to them. In the process he visited libraries, historical societies and government archives all over the country, from Massachusetts to California. Often he found a box or folder with the label, 'old Dutch records,' but with no information as to what the documents were about, since nobody could read them, and in those cases he organized the papers and provided a brief description of the contents. In almost every case he was able to get a copy of the documents, either Xerox or microfilm, and these are all housed at the New York State Library so that anyone interested in Dutch colonial history can study copies of all the original documents in this country in one place.

In addition, we have been trying to acquire copies of relevant documents housed in Europe. We have the surviving records of the West India Co. on 45 reels of microfilm, and abstracts of thousands of notaries' records in Amsterdam relative to America prior to the Revolution. The curator of the maritime museum in Holland is currently preparing a microfilm copy for us of the Van Rensselaer family papers in his custody.

The history of New Netherland, once a topic of no interest in The Netherlands, is becoming more and more popular among Dutch scholars, and several Dutch magazines, newspapers, and radio stations have done articles and interviews on our project. A young Dutch historian named Jan Volckers has become interested in the Dutch role in American history and has been working in various archives in The Netherlands looking for new information. Naturally we have done all we could to encourage him in his research. He has turned up some records in the city of Drenthe concerning 50 people who came from that city to Manhattan in the 1600s. He has also recently located the papers of Brant van Slichtenhorst, the first director of Rensselaerswyck, in the archives at Arnhem, and they are being microfilmed for us.

We sponsor an annual conference in Albany called the Rensselaerswyck Seminar, which a number of you have attended: a one day affair usually held in September which brings together professional and amateur scholars to present papers on various topics related to some unifying theme. The meetings are open to the public, and for the last few years we have been publishing the seminar papers. The topics have included early Albany, colonial education, crime and punishment, agriculture in Rensselaerswyck, and so on.

Four hundred years ago, Jeremias van Rensselaer published a little gossip sheet called the *New Netherland Marcurius* for the amusement of his friends. We have revived the *Marcurius* as an occasional news sheet where readers can find out what conferences and meetings are being held, what books and articles are being published, and it serves as a clearing house where scholars can list their particular interests and current research projects. This has been most useful in letting people know what research is going on, and is particularly valuable in letting people know about relevant work outside their own specialties. It can bring together a genealogist working on the Schuyler family with an archaeologist digging at a Schuyler house site.

That in brief is what the New Netherland Project is about, and where we're at today. This country had no translator of colonial Dutch records for 35 years, from the retirement of A.J.F. van Laer in 1939, until I hired Charles Gehring in 1974. For me, this has been a really exciting project—a dream come true, and despite the problems just a whole lot of fun. I think that that feeling is shared by a goodly number of Holland Society members—that and a feeling of satisfaction from having supported a pretty unique project.

The New Netherland Project started at a conference sponsored by The Holland Society, has had its books published by The Holland Society, has received an impressive amount of

Dr. Charles Gehring, project translator. Timothy Raabl/Northern Photo.

financial support from the Society, and a lot of help and interest. The end result of this ongoing cooperative effort is that we all learn more and more about the founding of America, and such matters as why your ancestors came over here, and what life was like for them after they arrived.

Our method of publication has been undergoing radical change lately, and I think you will be pleased by the eventual results. The first 17 books were produced by fairly primitive methods. The pages were typed on a typewriter, and reproduced by photo offset. It looks amateurish, and this has scared off any number of historians and other researchers who judge books by their looks, and think that ours don't look very scholarly. It did not help matters that the name of our publisher was the Genealogical Publishing Co. I know from conversations with historians that they thought the books were genealogical, and therefore of no interest to them.

As you know we next tried Heart of the Lakes Publishing,

which produced the Curacao Papers, a very nice looking volume, with what looks like real print—actually it was produced by computer, but only a print specialist armed with a magnifying glass could see the difference. The problem with Heart of the Lakes was that the publisher produced only one of our books in three years—we had been hoping for five or six in that time period. The State Library wasn't seeing any results of my efforts and pulled me off the project for a while to devote my attention to other library matters that needed doing.

But now The Holland Society is about to contract with Syracuse University Press to publish our books. Syracuse has become the prestigious press for New York studies, and we are interested in having our books taken seriously, so it looks like an ideal arrangement.

In the past, The Holland Society paid for the typist, and paid the cost of publishing. If we were still having the books typed it would cost about $10,000 per volume today. To have a book set in print is far more expensive than that. Fortunately technology has solved the problem. Computer operated desk top publishing makes it possible to produce print quality books such as the Curacao Papers at a fraction of the cost of true printing and yet it looks the same.

Since we could not get Heart of the Lakes to publish at the rate we wanted them to, and we couldn't afford to have Syracuse set the books in type, we decided that the only feasible solution to our problem was to buy our own desktop publishing equipment which Syracuse is glad to accept since it meets their standard of quality. One problem was that our federal grant did not provide money for equipment. This is where The Holland Society has been helping out a great deal in the last year, paying for the computers, printers, and publishing program. The bad news is that buying this equipment has cost you money. The good news is that it is proving to be much more economical and cost effective than the old system. The total cost of the equipment we now have is less than the cost of having Genealogical Publishing Co. publish two books—yet we will produce five books in the next year alone. There will be no printing costs for The Holland Society anymore—Syracuse University Press is paying for that, and is willing to share any profits with The Holland Society.

We now have four computers for five people, but three of the people are part-timers, so it usually works out all right. We also have two printers, and the desktop publishing program itself.

Beyond that it would be nice to have a full screen monitor so that we can see a full page at a time when we're setting up copy. Most screens show only a third of a page which makes it complicated to get the whole page looking right—you fix the top and it throws the bottom off, you fix the bottom and it throws the top off—soft of like trying to draw a picture if you can only see a third of your paper at a time.

It would be nice to have an optical scanner, but we're hoping we can create one out of available equipment in the State Library, rather than going out and buying one. What the scanner does is look at a printed or typed page and store the information in the computer's memory. So for instance when we're doing research, instead of our spending days taking notes by hand, the scanner would copy the information for us—a whole page in less than a minute.

The scanner is of interest to me because a while back we found a typescript that A.J.F. van Laer had prepared back in 1911—a book that the State was going to publish back then, but didn't. With the aid of a scanner for a morning we could enter the typescript into the computer, take no more than a month adding an introduction and an index, along with a few footnotes to explain legal terminology, and we have a book ready to be published.

I also have a typescript I made several years ago of Albany court records, 1685-1701, which I thought was going to sit on the shelf forever like van Laer's work—but if we can rig up a scanner, I could have the text in shape to be proofread within a few days. It is possible that we could have final copy ready within a few weeks after that.

Meanwhile, the State Library has been taking an increasing interest in providing support to the program, now that it is apparent that we are ready to start cranking out some books again. The Library has assigned me full time and permanently to the New Netherland Project—to edit books, give talks, answer letters, do research, work on conferences, build up the reference book collection, and write grant proposals. Between the English and Dutch records I would hope we can average two or three books per year.

New Netherland Postal Service

As early as 1652 the Dutch West India Company suggested to Director-General Peter Stuyvesant that he establish a system to supervise mail in New Netherland. However, no action seems to have been taken until 1659 when Stuyvesant made it obligatory for the Secretary of the Colony, Cornelius Van Tienhoven, to regulate the mail. The system, however, did not become effective at New Amsterdam until June of 1660.

A Dutch Teacher's Trials

Lacking a schoolhouse in which to teach his students, Harmanus Van Hobooken, the New Amsterdam schoolmaster, made an urgent appeal to Director-General Peter Stuyvesant and the Council in 1656 to be allowed "the use of the hall and side chamber of the Stadt House for the purpose of his school and as a residence for his family in as much as he has no place to keep school in or to live in during the winter, it being necessary that the rooms should be made warm which cannot be done in his own house from its unfitness.

Medical Regulations in New Amsterdam

In setting rules for the practice of medicine in New Amsterdam in 1652, Director-General Peter Stuyvesant and his Council denied barber-surgeons the exclusive right to "shave" patients as they had requested. At the same time he prohibited "ships' barber-surgeons to dress any wounds, bleed or prescribe any drinks (medicine) for anyone on land without the knowledge or special consent of the Director-General and Council or, at least (the consent) of Dr. La Montagne." (Dr. Johannes La Montagne, a graduate in medical studies of the University of Leyden, was the first educated medical doctor in New Amsterdam, arriving in 1637.) Stuyvesant gave as his excuse for prohibiting ships' barber-surgeons from treating ill or injured persons that it was due to "two or three serious mistakes—made by the inexperience of some ships' barbers last summer."

New Netherland Project examines colonial history

Translated old Dutch records positive on Dutch contribution to America

Translating Colonial Dutch documents has become American-born Charles Gehring's mission in life.

continued from page 13

The Project staff - Charles T. Gehring, Nancy Anne McClure Zeller, Dutch-born Janny Venema and part-timer Martha Dickinson Shattuck - have published the following books: • *The Andros Papers: 1674-1676;* • *Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York, 1664-1673;* • *Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York, 1674-1688;* • *Council Minutes, 1652-1654;* • *Curacao Papers;* • *Delaware Papers (Dutch Period), 1648-1664;* • *Delaware Papers (English Period), 1664-1682;* • *Fort Orange Court Minutes, 1652-1660;* • *Kingston Papers (2 volumes), 1661-1675;* • *Land Papers, 1630-1664;* • *Minutes of the Mayor's Court of New York, 1674-1675;* • *Nicolls and Lovelace Papers, 1664-1673;* • *Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, NY, 1660-1752;* • *Records of New Amsterdam (7 volumes)*

Works in Progress involve: • *The Andros Papers, 1677-1678;* • *The Andros Papers, 1679-1680;* • *Correspondence, 1646-1653 (forthcoming 1993);* • *Council Minutes, 1655-1656 (forthcoming 1993)* • *Council Minutes, 1668-1688 (forthcoming 1993);* • *Notarial Records of Beverwijck and Albany, 1654-1679 (forthcoming 1993);* • *Ordinances and Writs of Appeal, 1647-1674*

Books reviewed or mentioned on these pages can be ordered through:

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Modern tree nursery has new ways

Environment-friendly approach raises many eyebrows

BOSKOOP, The Netherlands - Tree nursery Van der Starre has developed environment friendly approaches to its tree growing techniques. Irrigation water, mixed with nutrients, for example, returns to recycling basins after circulating through Van der Starre's complex system of tree beds, preventing drainage into and pollution of Boskoop's waterways.

Van der Starre's approach have earned attention far and wide. The young firm is now one of five in the Netherlands that has become popular with colleagues who go on organised tours of the nursery. Van der Starre's method ensures equal growth in its young plants, and aims to reduce the chance of attracting diseases.

Elsewhere at the nursery, a tunnel covered by plastic protects fragile cuttings from the swings in the Dutch climate. There may be nothing unusual about such a tunnel, except that a system of heating pipes below the surface provides the cuttings with sufficient warmth to stimulate development of the roots. Some of Van der Starre's techniques have been used in horticulture for some time, but were not yet adapted for use in silviculture.

Strength and weaknesses

The superior strength of the English colonies is easily exaggerated. At the time of the conquest, England and the Dutch Republic were at war. A small fleet of English warships patrolled the coast of the colonies, which were deemed to be English territory, including New Netherland. The small band of Dutch soldiers were no match for the English ships at this point. However, the English themselves were far from unified in their policies. The Cromwellian conflicts caused deep division both in England and the English-American colonies. With all their firepower, it is obvious to Gehring that the Dutch communities in New Netherland in several ways were too strong for their conquerors - hence the favourable terms of surrender. In 1673, when a Dutch fleet of ships appeared before New Amsterdam, the English garrison in turn surrendered, returning the colony to its former masters until it was negotiated away in a territorial trade with Surinam fourteen months later.

The policies of the Dutch colonial government had far-reaching consequences. As noted earlier, New Netherland had a diverse population. Anyone was welcome provided that he or she would observe its laws and traditions. As was the case back home, officials allowed only the Reformed Church to function (fairly) free from interference. The colony's Lutherans - a fair number of people had come from the German states - and the Quakers wanted a pastor, but were not allowed to call one. The Huguenots (Calvinist refugees from France) and Walloons (French-speaking protestants from the Spanish-controlled southern provinces of the Netherlands) worshipped in their own language. In 1654, when the Dutch colony in Brazil (Recife) was lost to the Portuguese, part of the Jewish community there came to New Amsterdam. The Jews got permission to function freely in return for their commitment to take care of their own needy people (a function then solely carried out by the churches). The population-mix continues to be a feature of contemporary New York.

More documents required

Through Charles Gehring's work, Americans are becoming aware of historical roots they knew little about. Gehring is not satisfied, however, with only translating the documents at hand. He is continuously searching for missing links which he hopes to find in Dutch archives, such as the records on 'Patroon' Van Renselaer, a rich merchant family that owned and operated a vast tract of land along the Hudson River. Some of these records have been traced to Arnhem, where Gehring hopes to research them. Other small collections have surfaced over the years, but nothing of major proportions. However, Gehring is convinced that other collections - in places like Amsterdam, Utrecht and Leiden - are just gathering dust without anyone realising that these papers are there. More than anything else, Gehring would like to obtain access to private correspondence from colonists to relatives and friends 'back home'. From these letters, he and his assistants would like to learn more about the social history of the colony.

The New Netherland Project has made great progress over the last seventeen years. Gehring feels that more could be done, but is somewhat dismayed by the fact that Dutch communities of later arrival dates take so little interest in his project. While organisations like Calvin's Heritage Hall (CRC) in Grand Rapids, Mich. and the Joint Archives (RCA) in Holland, Mich. are mainly supported through denominational budgets, the New Netherland Project is only partially funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which reviews its commitment to the project every three years. The funding formula is founded on the principle of the 'matching dollar'. The Project receives a dollar for every one it raises privately. This, in turn, means that the New Netherland Project has to raise about half of its budget from a variety of sources, including small donations. To create a sympathetic constituency, a 'Friends of the New Netherland Project' program was launched in which donors would receive an quarterly newsletter in exchange for a US$25.00 donation.

Trying to locate New Netherland documents and supervising translation work are not Gehring's only concern. After the results have been published, he must strive to get the new data incorporated into curricula for history courses. From all appearances, Gehring and his New Netherland Project are making headway in this formidable task. Since Gehring's work in effect puts the Dutch contribution to North America 'on the map and into history books,' is it not time that all Dutch-Americans, their corporations and organisations, and Dutch institutions in 'the old country', put their shoulder to Gehring's wheel by providing encouragement and some hard cash?

***Those wishing to become a Friend of the New Netherlands Project** are invited to contribute US$25 (or more) per year to 'Friends of the New Netherlands Project', P.O. Box 2536 Empire State Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220-0536 (telephone: 1-518-474-6067. For US$50 (or more) annualy one can become a **New Netherlands Project donor**. Contributions for donorship to: 'New Netherlands Project', New York State Library, CEC 8th Floor, Albany, NY 12230.*

Huge horticulture exhibition

Floriade 1992 called earth's greatest flower show

ZOETERMEER, the Netherlands - Under the festive title of 'Floriade', the World Horticultural Exhibition will be held in the Netherlands this coming spring, summer and fall. This unique exhibition, organized once every ten years, is set in 70 hectares of parkland south of Zoetermeer near Den Haag.

Indoor and outdoor exhibitions of bulbs, flowers, potplants, shrubs, trees, vegetables and fruit will literally burst into bloom. Scores of gardens from Holland and every corner of the globe will be on display and there are theme pavilions, art, out-door sculptures, cultural and special events.

International theme

The exhibition park is divided into seven main themes, such as trade, transport, distribution, production, the world and recreation. The themes are designed to give Floriade visitors a fascinating insight into our planet. One can step into another world in the international gardens in the theme area 'The World', where at least 30 different countries will be represented.

Colorful sub-tropical flowers and fruits from Florida, the Japanese entry with its subtle landscaping, and entries from Belgium, Russia, Poland, Indonesia, Colombia and the United Kingdom will take your breath away.

More roses than tulips

After bulbs come the seed and nursery stock flowers in many colors and varieties. There are many varieties of roses in the Netherlands; in fact, more roses are exported from Holland than tulips! If you visit Westbroek Park in Den Haag during the first half of July, you will see more than 20,000 roses in full bloom. At least 350 types of roses compete for the coveted title of Golden Rose ('Gouden Roos').

Millions of tourists from the Netherlands, Europe, and further away are expected to visit Floriade. The exhibit will be open daily from April 10 through October 11, from 9:30 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

"Did you know they were Dutch?"

Director De Mille was fascinated by Dutch roots

Hollywood movie director Cecil B. De Mille is famous for the epic films he made, and for the innovations he used to make them. Among the more than 70 pictures he directed are such classics as 'Cleopatra', 'King of Kings', and 'The Ten Commandments.'

What many do not know, however, is that De Mille is one of many Americans who can trace their roots back to the Dutch who settled in Nieuw Amsterdam (present-day New York City). Former baker Antonius de Mil left his native Haarlem in 1658 to settle in the new world.

From Haarlem to Hollywood

The director De Mille, whose middle initial stood for Blount, another Dutch surname in his ancestry, was fascinated by his Dutch ancestry. In fact, he commissioned genealogical researcher Professor Louis Pier de Boer, an expert on the background of Dutch families in the United States, to research his family history. De Boer, who made two trips to the Netherlands to further his research, presented De Mille - and his artist sister Agnes) with a ten-chapter book chronicling the history of the De Mil/I/les back to a Gilles de Mil and Anne van der Walle of Ghent.

In 1931, De Mille, by then famous for successfully bringing Biblical stories to the silver screen - influenced in turn by the paintings of another 'Dutchman' (Alma-Tadema, see separate story) - visited the country of his ancestors for the first and only time. He stood reverently in front of the St. Bavo church in Haarlem, where many of his forefathers had been baptized, and, quoting Napoleon, said "It is as though four centuries of my forefathers are looking down upon me."

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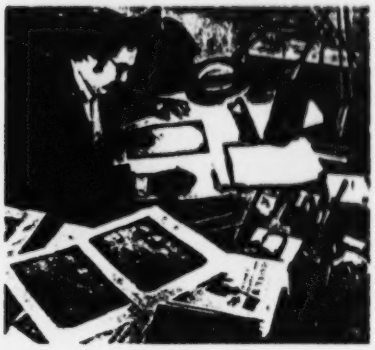
the Windmill Post
The English-language supplement of the Windmill

New Netherland Project examines colonial history

Old Dutch records show positive side to Dutch contribution to America



by Albert van der Heide

ALBANY, New York - Many North Americans know that a one-legged Netherlands-born governor, Peter Stuyvesant, lived long ago, and have been told that he was a stubborn and opinionated Dutchman who surrendered his colony to a fleet of English warships when that appeared off the coast of New Netherland. Many North Americans also have heard about the famous real estate deal in which the Dutch director Peter Minuit bought the Island of Manhattan from Indians for a batch of trinkets. And many of these same people, when they hear about another one of New York's many problems, may well joke that they should sell the state, and especially the city, back to the Indians. Beyond a few generalities, the average American knows little about Stuyvesant, his colony New Netherland, the Dutch settlers, and about the earliest history of his nation's largest metropolitan city.

The citizens of the Netherlands today would not fare much better in that respect. For the past thirty years or so, it has not been a particularly popular pastime to study American history, let alone colonial American history. Rather, the current Dutch generation has been exposed to many elements of early American aboriginal history. But if US-born Charles Gehring can help it, the awareness and knowledge of Dutch North-American colonial history on both sides of the Atlantic is going to increase by leaps and bounds!

Thirteen volumes

For the past seventeen years, Charles Gehring has been working at the painstaking task of unlocking the secrets of the early colonial history of the State of New York. A Germanic linguist with a PhD in seventeenth century Dutch, the American of German descent was hired to translate New Netherland documents into English.

Gehring heads the New Netherland Project, and runs the operation from the New York State Library, its sponsor, at Albany on the Hudson. Since 1974, Gehring has published 13 volumes of documents, and estimates that he is about halfway through his assignment.

Heroic action saved records

It is nothing short of a miracle that America's Dutch colonial documents have survived the centuries. The papers were kept at dozens of locations; during the American Revolution - when New York was occupied by the English and much of the city was threatened by fires - the collection was stored aboard a ship where rats literally fed themselves on the colonial documents. Newer were the papers closer to total loss than in 1911, when the New York State Library was severely damaged in a fire. The Dutch collection suffered too, but not as much as the English colonial documents. Library staff had placed the Dutch files on shelves below those containing English documents, which gave some protection in the hour of disaster when the documents from the top shelves dropped onto the lower-placed Dutch collection. Many English documents were destroyed.

Gehring's predecessor, Netherlands-born Mr. A.J.F. Van Laer, risked his life to save the Dutch collection from the fire, dashing into the burning building to carry yet another batch of letters outside. Van Laer translated four volumes, which after his death were published by the Holland Society of New York in 1973.

Fifth generation translator

The translation work has had its up and downs, with a greater quantity of the latter. The first efforts were made during the early years of the nineteenth century, when exiled Dutch patriot A.F. van der Kemp, who later became known as 'the scholar in the wilderness', tried his hand (and pen) at Stuyvesant's letters to his masters of the West-India Company in Amsterdam.

Van der Kemp's work was later found to be inadequate and unreliable, since he skipped parts he deemed unimportant or rephrased them if he so desired. These inconsistencies were already noticed by E.B. O'Callaghan, Van der Kemp's successor. The third attempt at translation was made by a Berthold Fernow, while Van Laer's effort already has been noted. Gehring, who is assisted by several part-timers, represents the fifth generation of translators, although it should be noted that very little work was done between 1920 and 1974.

Tracing identities

Gehring's books are reportedly very thorough, and contain a subject and name index. Although he admits that people will likely discover flaws in this work, Gehring goes to extraordinary lengths to research the material he translates. To Gehring, it is not good enough if a document refers to a Jan Jansz - of which there were more than one. He uses several methods to establish the identity of each individual beyond the basic reference, which is very good news to those who engage in genealogical research.

The New Netherland Project has already made a worthwhile contribution to the study of American history. A number of students have obtained their doctorates with theses on New Netherland history.

Dutch built community

After all those years poring over hard-to-read scribbles by seventeenth century Dutchmen, Gehring is more enthusiastic than ever about his life's mission. He has learned to respect people like Stuyvesant, and others. "The Dutch deserve a lot more credit for their colony than is generally given to them," says Gehring. "That they deserve the credit is amply born out by history. The colony was relatively new at the time of the English conquest, and only had - at the most - 10,000 Dutchmen, with many more people of a very diverse background. Yet, the Dutch made such a solid imprint on their community that they continued to function along Dutch ways and in the Dutch language for a very long time."

The Dutch were not just adventurous fur traders as some would have them, according to Gehring, they were community builders. "By 1650 at Beverwyck - present-day Albany, New York State's capital city - there was a court, a church; there were schools, many trades, 15 bakers and 20 taverns. Still, some English historians dismissed the Dutch as having built no sense of community." Other nationalities who settled among the Dutch were totally absorbed, speaking Dutch before long. The Dutch brought their institutions over with them, which were, reports Gehring, very modern for their days.

Re-evaluating Stuyvesant

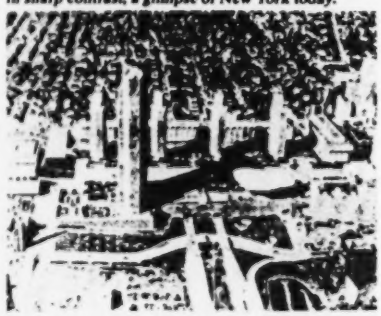
Stuyvesant was far from being the arrogant, stubborn and pompous man history has made him appear. "He was governor as well as judge, and served his employers well. But," says Gehring, "he was also honest and fair to his subjects, Dutchmen and Indians. All this needs to be seen in the moral framework of his time. Stuyvesant requested that his employers send more slaves from Africa, but at the same time he made a case for having them involved in better types of jobs, such as blacksmiths and wagon makers. Just before Stuyvesant surrendered the colony to the English, he set all the slaves free."

Gehring has discovered ample evidence that Stuyvesant surrendered the colony upon the urgings of the citizenry. According to documents, the Dutch burghers especially feared the English segment of the Dutch colony which was ready to plunder the homes and businesses of the Dutch colonials. When the Dutch became aware of the plans by this fifth column (from such villages like Gravesend and Hampton), they convinced Stuyvesant to negotiate the surrender of the colony. While the burghers argued for peaceful surrender, Stuyvesant's soldiers -Gehring numbers them at about 350 - were very willing to defend the colony against superior fire power.

According to Gehring, Stuyvesant had doubts about the loyalty of the English settlers for some years already. Meanwhile, the population of the English colonies had grown quickly and would be difficult to resist in time. Stuyvesant chose to settle in the colony as a private citizen.

continued on page 14

Picture top left: Faded documents, often burned at the edges, Seventeenth-century handwriting and antequated Dutch are all aspects of the work of Charles Gehring, who leads the monumental project of adding another dimension to America's known history. Bottom: Nieuw Amsterdam in the days of Stuyvesant; and in sharp contrast, a glimpse of New York today.



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'They became us'

SUNDAY TIMES UNION*
September 22, 1991

Earliest colonists, the Dutch, left indelible mark

By Patrick Kurp
Staff writer

ALBANY — In a once-Dutch city, in a once-Dutch state, even 327 years after the English bumped them from imperial dominance, the Dutch survive in subtle, indelible, unexpected ways.

"Take a look around you," said Charles Gehring, director of the New Netherland Project of the State Library. "They became us. It's one of those things: It's so close to you, you don't see it."

Through material artifacts — cookies, barns — and linguistic traces — "cookies" (from the Dutch *koekje*), "maelstrom" — scholars at the 14th Rensselaerswijck Seminar on Saturday illustrated the title of their meeting: "The Persistence of the Dutch After 1664."

The seminar, sponsored by the New Netherland Project, focused on what Joyce Goodfriend, professor of history at the University of Denver in Colorado, called "the tendency of history to be written from the point of view of the winners."

In arguments that echoed current attacks on ethnocentricism in American universities, Goodfriend criticized the Anglicization of Colonial history. Because the Duke of York displaced Gov. Pieter Stuyvesant in 1664, New Netherland became New York, Fort Orange became Albany, and history was written from the English perspective.

"To the victors belong the textbooks," Goodfriend said.

Citing research she did for her upcoming book, "Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City 1664-1730," Goodfriend showed how the formerly dominant Dutch, though still influential, became a minority with the arrival of English, Scots, Irish, French, Germans, Jews and Africans.

"Colonial New York was a multiethnic society with a broad spectrum of religious institutions," she said.

Goodfriend knocked historians for assuming that political changes signal immediate and lasting changes in culture.

"But changes in rulers may prove inconsequential to the life of the ruled. Everyday routines, the institutions that are central to private life, and fundamental beliefs about life's meaning may be impervious to political currents," she said.

See **DUTCH** / D-12

DUTCH

Continued from D-1

David Steven Cohen, senior research associate with the New Jersey Historical Commission, noted how Dutch barn design survived through the late 19th century, and how Dutch architectural elements are still used in homes and public buildings.

"One by one, these survivals began to disappear," he said, "until only the farmhouses remained on the landscape in mute testimony to the making of an American regional subculture."

Cohen dismissed the idea perpetuated by some architectural historians that Dutch barns were based on English designs.

"The people were not necessarily becoming English. They were becoming American," he said. "This distinctly Dutch-American culture survived, and remained regionally distinct throughout the 19th century."

David E. Narrett, associate professor of history at the University of Texas at Arlington, showed how Dutch marital and property laws persisted several generations after the English usurped the Dutch.

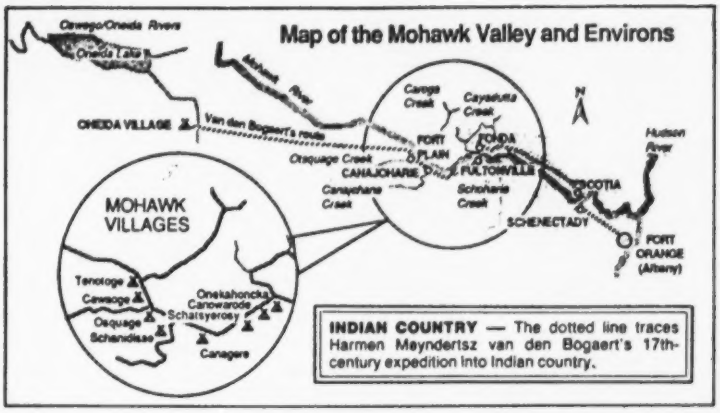
"Multiculturalism (or to say pluralism, a more old-fashioned academic term) was, of course, a historical reality in New Netherland. For more than any other colony in 17th-century North America, the Dutch colony was a mix of groups," he said.

Elizabeth Paling Funk, adjunct assistant professor of history at Manhattanville College, showed how Dutch themes survived in the works of such 19th-century American writers as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville.

"Of Dutch descent or not," Funk said, "these New Yorkers regarded the Dutch heritage as their own. This separated them from New England in ways of expression, historical experience, customs, attitudes and values."

Gehring, a translator of Dutch documents, titled his paper "Mine Owdes Sprawke Laag Dauits Airder dan Engels" — "My Parents Preferred to Speak Low Dutch to English." In it, he chronicled the survival of Dutch dialects through the 19th century.

"Unless there are still speakers of *de taal* living in some isolated region of the Catskills," Gehring said, "the only remains of the language survive in a handful of words adopted by American English and the nursery rhyme 'Trippa, Troppa, Trontie.' "



Pair unravel adventurer's diary

By Judy Shepard
Staff writer

The year was 1634 and the Dutch at Fort Orange were worried.

Their profitable fur trade with the Indians had dwindled, threatening the trading outpost's very survival.

When they learned the Indians were thinking of doing business with the rival French, the Dutch wasted no time.

They sent a hard-charger, 32-year-old Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, on an urgent mission deep into Indian country to save the fur trade.

Accompanied by two other white men and five Mohawk guides, van den Bogaert left Fort Orange Dec. 11.

Their journey, on foot through freezing temperatures, knee-deep snow, floods and unknown Indian territory, took them all the way to a village near Oneida Lake before they returned to Fort Orange Jan. 21.

They followed the Mohawk River, passing through or near what are now Schenectady, Scotia, Fonda, Canajoharie and Fort Plain.

The six-week expedition was not the first by a white man, but the journal van den Bogaert kept is the earliest written record of such a journey.

As such it is a valuable historical document, but it is also a fascinating tale of adventure in Indian country written by a man whose later life — and death — reads like a creation of William Kennedy's rich imagination.

The diary, "A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country, 1634-1635," (Syracuse University Press, $17.50) has been translated into English by Charles Gehring, director of the New Netherland Project in Albany, and William A.

See **JOURNAL** / G-6

JOURNAL

Continued from G-1

Starna, professor and chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the State University College at Oneonta.

"I think it's a very important book," says William N. Fenton, distinguished professor of anthropology emeritus at the State University at Albany who is generally recognized as the dean of Iroquoian studies.

"It's one of the first accounts of the Mohawk and Oneida Indians in the 17th century."

Fenton cites a critical passage containing the first record of the names of the Iroquois tribes, in addition to the first written reference to the Indian confederacy. Both were incomplete or incorrect in two earlier translations.

The journal also includes the earliest word list of the Mohawk language.

Adding to the value of the book is the fact that not much is known about this period, since many of the official records of the Dutch trading company were destroyed.

So as a work of scholarship the book carries good credentials. But those who are daunted by a volume whose narrative is shorter than the notes on the text can rest easy: van den Bogaert's diary also brings to life a rousing good tale of a wilderness adventure 350 years ago.

Gehring describes van den Bogaert as "the type of person who was interested in everything, constantly on, wants to know everything, very curious. You have a feeling he was constantly pestering the Indians with questions."

That may have been so, but the Indians were curious, too. Van den Bogaert mentions frequently they are surrounded by such a crowd of Indians they can barely move. He writes at one point, "They pushed one another into the fire in order to see us."

It becomes apparent through the lines of the narrative that van den Bogaert was unable even to relieve himself without an attentive Indian audience.

"They were never left alone; the Indians were so curious," Gehring says. "Some had been to Fort Orange, but 99 percent had never been east of Amsterdam. This was deep in Indian country."

But these people were no noble, innocent savages vulnerable to exploitation by the savvy Dutch. It is clear from the first page of van den Bogaert's journal that the Indians were shrewd traders and negotiators, playing the French and Dutch off against each other to get the best prices for beaver pelts.

The journal is filled with details of the Indian diet — beans, pumpkin, salmon, turkey, venison, bear and beaver meat. The author also stepped off the dimensions of the longhouses, describing them, the villages and the cemeteries in detail.

A surgeon, van den Bogaert was asked to look at a patient and was also invited to witness a healing ritual in which two doctors vomited on the patient.

Van den Bogaert makes light of the hardships of his travels, which were many. He does mention getting lice from a bearskin blanket and that his boots froze solid after crossing a river.

"It was just the way it was, which is typical of these journals," Gehring explains. "The most important thing is getting down the information; the personal is left out. The fact that he mentioned his discomfort at all is an indication of how bad it must have been.

"You have to imagine: They were probably wearing leather boots which were most likely either damp or frozen, depending on the weather."

Another indication of the danger of the journey is the worried letters and messengers that dog the travelers' footsteps. When the party failed to return by early January, Marten Gerritsen, the commissary of Fort Orange, was convinced the three had been killed and sent messengers after them for news of their fate.

CHARLES GEHRING
. . . of New Netherland Project

Not only did van den Bogaert and his companions return safely, but the trip was a success.

"A new price structure was established and the fur trade was revitalized as a result," Gehring says.

Van den Bogaert's success on the mission got the young man's career off to a strong start. He went on to earn a place as a trusted, powerful and well-respected member of the community. By 1640, he had married and, in addition to his medical duties, had gone into privateering. When he returned from this venture, he was named to the high rank of commissary of stores on Manhattan.

But it all came apart in the fall of 1647, when van den Bogaert was accused of one of the most heinous crimes of the day, sodomy, with his black servant Tobias.

Determined to avoid the harsh sentence he knew he'd face, van den Bogaert took flight — into the same Indian country he had explored 13 years earlier.

He was recaptured and taken to Fort Orange, where he was imprisoned until spring would allow travel downriver and he could be taken to Manhattan for trial.

Van den Bogaert broke out before the thaw and ran across the frozen Hudson to escape, but the ice gave way under him and he drowned.

"Among the Dutch, sodomy was something that had to be exturpated," Gehring says. "The punishment was to be publicly humiliated, beaten with rods 25 times, sown up in a bag and thrown in the river and drowned. The irony of it was that this — drowning — is what happened to van den Bogaert."

Another good story is that of the translation itself, during which Gehring and Sarna discovered a forgery of two early Dutch documents dating from van den Bogaert's journey.

On Dec. 14, Jeronimus dela Croix, one of van den Bogaert's companions, wrote to Fort Orange from Indian country to request paper, salt and tobacco.

A manuscript and accompanying map, purported to be those of dela Croix, were found among documents by the late L.G. van Loon, who translated and published them around 1940.

Sarna and Gehring, referring to these two papers in their work on the journal, first became suspicious when they discovered an error that came about in an earlier translation of the diary, but did not appear in the Dutch version.

There were other clues: "The feel of the paper, and the handwriting didn't look right to me," Gehring says. Tests subsequently proved the forgery; the paper was old, the ink new.

"It's a tangled web," Gehring says. "I even called up Bill (Starna) after this and said, 'Bill, I'm not too sure about the van den Bogaert journal.' "

Happily he was joking, and we are left with a true tale of early times and travels that lingers in the air along the Mohawk Valley in Indian country.

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Charles Gehring vertaalt koloniale handschriften

„Nederlandse geschiedenis in Amerika populair"

NIJKERK – „Vijf jaar geleden bezocht ik Nijkerk met een reisgezelschap waarvoor ik als gids optrad. De groep bestond uit inwoners van Albany en was zeer geinteresseerd naar de Europese geschiedenis, die op veel punten met de Noordamerikaanse verbonden is. We hebben onder meer de Grote Kerk bezocht en een onderhoud gehad met burgemeester Van der Zaag". In de laatste twee weken van mei was dr. Charles Gehring weer op Nederlandse bodem voor bronnenonderzoek. De Amerikaan, die vloeiend Nederlands spreekt, heeft van het vertalen der oude Nederlandse koloniale manuscripten zijn levenswerk gemaakt. Tussen die tienduizenden papierassen bevindt zich ook veel materiaal over de „Nijkerkse periode" in de geschiedenis van Noord-Amerika.

Charles Gehring heeft Germaanse talen bestudeerd aan de universiteit van West-Virginia en kon met behulp van de zeer bekende Fulbright-beurs eveneens voor een periode zijn kennis verbreden op een Duitse universiteit te Freiburg. Eigenlijk niet zo verwonderlijk dat hij, na een „zweeftocht" langs diverse andere studierichtingen, terecht kwam in het Germaanse taalgebied. Halverwege de vorige eeuw emigreerden zijn voorouders vanuit Duitsland naar de Verenigde Staten. Zij waren de onzekere situatie in Europa, waar revoluties en wapengekletter het leven niet bepaald vrolijker maakten, beu en probeerden hun geluk in de Nieuwe Wereld. Het noodlot wilde dat zij juist op het moment van de naderende burgeroorlog arriveerden. En zodoende konden de kerngezonde Duitse immigranten direct de wapens oppakken om aan de kant van president Lincoln mee te vechten in een zeer bloedige strijd tegen de zuidelijke Confederatie.

Koloniaal

Charles Gehring heeft grondig de taal van zijn voorouders bestudeerd en heeft een uitstapje gemaakt naar een andere afdeling binnen de Germaanse talen: het Nederlands, met als specialisme het koloniale Nederlands, zoals dat in de zeventiende eeuw onder meer in New York werd gesproken. Zodoende is Gehring niet alleen één van de weinige Amerikanen die het Nederlands beheerst, maar kan hij tevens een taal begrijpen en een handschrift ontcijferen dat zelfs voor de meeste Nederlanders onbegrijpelijk is. Gehring: „Volgend jaar, 1992, is het vijfhonderd jaar geleden dat Columbus Amerika ontdekte. Dat zal op vele plaatsen in de wereld worden herdacht. Er zullen allerlei festiviteiten plaatsvinden en uiteraard zal nogmaals onder de aandacht worden gebracht waartoe Columbus' ontdekking allemaal heeft geleid, namelijk de komst van vele Europese volkeren naar Amerika. Ikzelf zal medewerking verlenen aan een speciale uitgave van „Americana", het Nederlandse tijdschrift voor de studie van Noord-Amerika. Deze uitgave zal geheel in het teken staan van de Nederlanders die naar Amerika trokken. Verder weet ik dat het in Amsterdam gevestigde John Adams Instituut een uitgebreide tentoonstelling wil organiseren over de koloniale Nieuw-Nederland. Er zullen onder meer kooklessen over het eten in de zeventiende eeuw worden gegeven."

Manuscripten

Gehring is heel goed thuis in die Nederlandse episode van de Noordamerikaanse geschiedenis. Al bijna twintig jaar lang is hij nauw betrokken bij het enorme vertaalwerk der Nederlandse koloniale manuscripten, die weliswaar allemaal te vinden zijn in de New-Yorkse Staatsbibliotheek te Albany. Gehring: „Ik ben dan wel een taalkundige, maar schrik niet terug van een beetje geschiedenis. Door mijn vele vertaalwerk heb ik immers ontzettend veel primaire bronnen gelezen over de kolonie Nieuw-Nederland en allerlei facetten van die episode daaromheen. Historici hebben in Amerika prestiger, de Amerikanen zijn zeer geinteresseerd in hun eigen geschiedenis. Zelfs tamelijk specialistische studies weten een breed lezerspubliek te bereiken en menig geschiedenisboek wordt een 'best-seller'."

Het is opmerkelijk hoezeer de geschiedenis van Nieuw-Nederland steeds meer aandacht krijgt van de doorsnee Amerikaanse lezer. Thomas Burke en Joyce Goodfriend schreven succesvolle boeken over de geschiedenis van de staat New York, alwaar de Nederlandse kolonisten het meest actief zijn geweest. Menig boek wordt heruitgegeven als paperback, zodat het geschrevene voor een groter publiek betaalbaar wordt." Een hele lange tijd is de Nederlandse episode in de Noordamerikaanse geschiedenis verwaarloosd. Die episode begon met het verkennen van de Noordamerikaanse kusten door de Engelsman Henry Hudson in dienst van de Nederlandse VOC. Weldra werd Nieuw-Amsterdam gebouwd op de zuidpunt van het smalle en langgerekte eiland Manhattan en breidde de Nederlandse kolonie zich uit tot de huidige staten New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware en Pennsylvania. De Nijkerkse nederzetting Schenectady werd de meest noordelijke plaats binnen de Nederlandse invloedssfeer. Het Nederlandse gebied zat ingeklemd tussen de twee Engelse koloniën Nieuw-Engeland (in het noorden) en Virginia (in het zuiden). Tussen het Engelse imperium in Amerika werd dus een lelijke Nederlandse wig gedreven, een belangrijke reden waarom de Engelsen in 1664 Nieuw-Nederland, dat onder leiding stond van Peter Stuyvesant, annexeerden ter consolidering van hun eigen kolonie. Met die Engelse overname begon de langzame terugtocht van alles wat Nederlands was en de nieuwe heersers hielpen daarbij, aangezien ze weinig sympathiek stonden tegenover de Nederlandse rivalen. Menige Nederlandse plaatsnaam kreeg een geheel nieuwe Engelse naam en de Nederlandse taal werd eerst weggewerkt in de formele stukken van de autoriteiten en vervolgens ook uit de zakenwereld en het dagelijkse leven. Tot in het begin van deze eeuw werd er nog verbasterd Nederlands gesproken in New York, de taal handhaafde zich het langst in de Hudson Valley en rond Albany-Schenectady, alwaar de diensten van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk in de negentiende eeuw nog in het Nederlandse werden gehouden. Alle (officiele) papieren van de kolonie Nieuw-Nederland werden door de Engelse veroveraars weggemoffeld en allerlei negatieve verhalen over het oude Nederlandse bewind gingen de ronde doen. Nieuw-Nederland wilden de Engelsen in de vergetelheid doen raken en wie zich deze kolonie toch herinnerde, had er „via-via" veel negatiefs over gehoord.

Waarde

Het Britse gezag legde tenslotte in 1783 het loodje tegenover de Amerikaanse rebellen en bijna een eeuw later, in 1881, werden de weggestopte Nederlandse koloniale manuscripten als het ware herontdekt. De Newyorkse Staatsbibliotheek erkende toen de historische waarde van de tienduizenden stukken en borg ze met enige zorg op. Geen haan die er verder naar kraaide, want geen enkele Engelssprekende Amerikaan kon de stukken lezen en ook Nederlandssprekenden konden uit het gehanteerde handschrift weinig zinnigs halen.

Gehring: „Intussen bleef de negatieve beeldvorming over Nieuw-Nederland, zoals deze door Britse geschiedschrijvers was opgebouwd, voortbestaan. Amerikaanse historici verdiepten zich geenszins in de onleesbare Nederlandse geschriften, zodat zij hun materiaal over Nieuw-Nederland uit Engelse bronnen bleven halen. Overigens, lange tijd was niemand geinteresseerd in die Nederlandse episode, die als zijnde tamelijk onbelangrijk voor de Noordamerikaanse geschiedenis werd afgedaan." In het begin van deze eeuw waagde zich een Nederlandse nazaat in de VS, een zekere Van Laer, aan het vertalen van de Nederlandse manuscripten, die voornamelijk officiële stukken van de „Geoctroyeerde Westindische Compagnie" bevatten. In 1911 woedde er maar liefst ruim drie dagen lang een felle brand in de Staatsbibliotheek, die vele opgeslagen primaire bronnen in de as legde. Van Laer rende hetgeen hij aandelijk het brandende gebouw in en uit om zoveel mogelijk stukken te redden. Na afloop van de tragedie bleek dat de Nederlandse manuscripten, die altijd als minst belangrijke materiaal op de onderste boomplanken waren terechtgekomen, waren toegedekt door de verwoeste Engelse manuscripten. Van Laer kon zijn geluk niet op en ging na de brand verder met zijn vertaalwerk. Toch was eveneens een deel van de Nederlandse bronnen door de brand aangetast. Van Laer bewaarde in zijn la talloze geblakerde papiersnippers! In 1939 ging de vertaler met pensioen. Zijn werk had weinig waardering gevonden, maar dat zou enkele decennia later veranderen.

Charles Gehring voor het beeldje van Peter Stuyvesant op het plein van het West-Indische Huis te Amsterdam, waar ook het John Adams-instituut is ondergebracht. Gehring was voor onderzoek in Nederland. Tijdens zijn vertaalwerk treft hij soms stukken „Nijkerkse" geschiedenis aan. In 1984 ontmoette Gehring de Nijkerkse delegatie in Schenectady.

In 1973 wordt Gehring door de directeur van de Staatsbibliotheek te Albany, Christoph, in dienst genomen als vertaler van de Nederlandse archieven. Christoph bestempelde het historische beeld dat van Nieuw-Nederland in de loop der tijd was opgebouwd als „pure nonsens", doordat er nooit objectief studie was verricht naar het reilen en zeilen van deze kolonie. Gehring: „Toen ik met mijn vertaalwerk begon, vroegen sommige mensen wat daar het nut van is. Zij vonden dat het geschiedenisverhaal van Noord-Amerika al genoegzaam bekend is. Ik vind dat geen sterk argument. Indien mogelijk moet je een historisch beeld zo compleet mogelijk maken en dat doe je niet als er nog tienduizenden onvertaalde papierassen achter worden gehouden."

Nonsens

„Het vertalen is een inspannende bezigheid" Met enige regelmaat ben ik toe aan een sterkere bril. Ik vertaal ongeveer drie pagina's per dag. Sinds enkele jaren word ik bijgestaan door twee assistentes, Nancy Zeller en Janny Venema. Laatstgenoemde is afkomstig uit Nederland, waar ze geschiedenisstuderes was. Het vertalen wordt moetlijker gemaakt door allerlei beschadigingen aan het materiaal en de hopeloze spelling uit de zeventiende eeuw. In die tijd waren er geen woordenboeken – die kwamen pas honderd jaren later in gebruik – en schreef iedereen zoals het hem of haar uitkwam. Het beeld van Nieuw-Nederland is nu veel breder en gedetailleerder geworden. Vooral over het leven van alledag zijn historici meer te weten gekomen. Vóór mijn werk begon, waren er enige Nederlandse bronnen bekend bij onderzoekers, maar deze handelden uitsluitend over de gevoerde politiek van Peter Stuyvesant en de zijnen. Nu weten we tevens hoe het leven van de gewone man (en vrouw) gewoest is in die koloniale tijd." Gehring vertaalt niet alleen, maar rest ook stad en land af om spreekbeurten te houden (Amerika zit barstensvol historische genootschapjes) en congressen te bezoeken. Zeer bekend is het Van Rensselaerswyck Seminar, dat jaarlijks professionele en amateur-historici bij elkaar brengt om onderzoeksgegevens uit te wisselen.

Project

Gehring stelde een bibliografie samen over het Nederlandse bronnenmateriaal en onderzocht vele Amerikaanse bibliotheken vanuit lust tot kunst op de aanwezigheid van eventuele Nederlandstalige manuscripten, daarvan maakte hij een kopie op microfilm en bracht deze naar Albany. Zodoende is de Newyorkse Staatsbibliotheek uitgegroeid tot een ware specialist in de geschiedenis van Nieuw-Nederland, die ook zoekt naar aanvullend materiaal in Europese bibliotheken. Gehring: „Al dit werk is ondergebracht in „The New Netherland Project". Het project moedigt andere onderzoekers aan en wil de historische onderzoekers op dit specifieke gebied tot elkaar brengen, opdat het geschiedenisbeeld van Noord-Amerika daadwerkelijk „volledig" wordt." Een blijvend probleem voor het project is het budget. In 1973 kon Gehring met zijn vertaalwerk aan de slag door tussenkomst van Nelson Rockefeller, de toenmalig gouverneur van de staat New York. Deze wist een staatsubsidie voor het project te bewerkstelligen (bepaald geen alledaags verschijnsel in de V.S.) Vervolgens werd met veel kunst- en vliegwerk het salaris van Gehring en de overige onkosten steeds weer bijeikaar geschraapt. De rijke Holland Society in Amerika kwam (en komt) steeds met veel financiële injecties. Gehring: „Over twintig jaar hopen we klaar te zijn met het vertalen. Helaas gaat veel tijd zitten in het werven van fondsen, wat voornamelijk op de schouders van Nancy Zeller rust. We hebben ook wel geen geld uit Nederland ontvangen, zoals van Heineken en het Prins Bernhardfonds. Halverwege de jaren tachtig is het project gelukkig steeds meer in redelijk stabiel financieel vaarwater gekomen." Uit het Nieuw-Nederland Project is in 1989 het Nieuw-Nederland Festival voortgekomen, dat via diverse evenementen de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis aan de Amerikaanse oostkust onder de aandacht van het grote publiek wenste te brengen. Zo werd onder meer Henry Hudsons schip „De Halve Maen" nagebouwd in Albany. Met dit schip voer Hudson de Noord-rivier (later Hudson Rivier) op. Als Gehring straks klaar is met zijn monnikenwerk, zijn de Nederlandse bronnen toegankelijk gemaakt voor onderzoekers uit de hele wereld.

Mohawk

Gehring: „Het interessante aan de Nijkerkse geschiedenis in New York is het contact met de Mohawk-indianen waarop de inwoners van Schenectady stuitten. Momenteel zijn boeken over de indianen razendpopulair in de Verenigde Staten. Ik noem dit het „Dancing with wolves-syndroom", naar de jongste bioscoopfilm, door zich energiek op de geschiedenis rondom de indianen te storten, hopen de huidige (blanke) inwoners van Amerika in het reine te komen met hun collectieve geweten – zij vinden het namelijk niet zo'n pretje wat er in vorige eeuwen met de oorspronkelijke bewoners van Amerika is gebeurd." Door het lezen van al die koloniale papierassen heeft Gehring een weihaast perfect beeld van de Nederlanders in de zeventiende eeuw gekregen. Volgens hem vertrokken de mensen toen vooral om economische redenen naar Noord-Amerika. „Ik ben altijd zeer nieuwsgierig geweest naar de motivatie van de Europese emigranten. In de vorige eeuw trokken zij veelal om idealistische redenen naar Amerika, de V.S. vertegenwoordigden toen iets „nieuws", iets „beters". In de zeventiende eeuw bestond de V.S. nog niet en was er niets idealistisch aan het emigreren naar het nieuwe continent in het westen. Toen overheersten duidelijk economische motieven om de biezen te pakken, hoewel die overweging uiteraard ook later van wezenlijk belang bleef. Als enigszins idealistisch te typeren zijn wel die groepen, die in de zeventiende eeuw om religieuze redenen Europa ontvluchtten. Deze mensen wensten in Amerika heel duidelijk een betere wereld voor zichzelf te creëren. De Pelgrims van Nieuw-Engeland zijn daarvan een goed voorbeeld."

Energiek

Uit de archiefstukken die Gehring heeft doorgeworsteld, komt een beeld van de Nederlandse kolonist naar voren, die zich energiek handhaafde in het ruige New York. Heel wat anders dan de satire van ene Washington Irving in zijn zogeheten Knickerbockerverhalen, waarin de Hollander als luilak belachelijk wordt gemaakt. Gehring: „Nieuw-Nederland was een bruisende „frontier"-samenleving. De Britten hebben dat beeld verduisterd, net zoals zij gouverneur Stuyvesant in een kwaad daglicht hebben gesteld." Stuyvesant gal zijn kolonie aan de Engelsen over om bloedvergieten te voorkomen, zo blijkt uit de archiefstukken. Maar de Engelsen hebben constant volgebouden dat zijn onderdanen weinig op hadden met zijn bewind en dat ze hem daarom liever zagen gaan dan komen. In de Amerikaanse taal zijn allerlei van het Nederlands afgeleide woorden blijven bestaan. Zo is „dollar" afkomstig van „daalder", „Santa Claus" van Sinterklaas en zelfs „Yankee" van Jan-Kees (hoewel hierover verschillende versies de ronde doen). „Thanksgivingday" is niet meer los te zien van alles dat met Amerika te maken heeft. De Pelgrims introduceerden deze traditie in Amerika, maar zij hadden het afgekeken van de Hollanders tijdens hun eerder verblijf in Leiden. Het Nederlandse fenomeen van openbare scholen en de strikte scheiding tussen kerk en staat zijn door de VS overgenomen. De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden werd bestuurd door de burgerlijke stand en niet door de adel (zoals andere Europese staten); dit bestuursidee namen de latere Amerikanen over. Gehring: „Het is onmogelijk om de Amerikaanse geschiedenis te begrijpen, indien je niets afweet van het Nederlandse verhaal daarin. Ik voel mij altijd thuis onder de Nederlanders, omdat ik hier karaktertrekken aantref, die ik bij Amerikanen terugvind. Het midden-gedeelte van Amerika is heel anders dan het puriteinse Nieuw-Engeland in het noorden en de zuidelijke staten, die zo hun eigen geschiedenis hebben. In Nieuw-Nederland is de Amerikaanse smeltkroes daadwerkelijk begonnen. Naar deze kolonie kwamen allerlei nationaliteiten, die door het bestuur werden getolereerd. Dit werd in de hand gewerkt doordat de Westindische Compagnie werkluis uit andere landen aantrok, omdat er niet genoeg Nederlanders waren om deze vloot te bemannen. Het idee van die smeltkroes vind ik persoonlijk de belangrijkste gift van de Nederlanders aan de huidige Verenigde Staten."

Edwin Pel

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NEW YORK HISTORY

Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association

volume 72 • October 1991 • number 4

Fort Orange Court Minutes, 1652-1660. Translated and edited by Charles T. Gehring. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990. Pp. xliii, 591. $75.00.)

Reviewed by Oliver A. Rink, Department of History, California State University, Bakersfield.

In the early 1920s, New York State librarian A.J.F. van Laer translated and edited the minutes of the court of Fort Orange and Beverwyck. Unfortunately, his two-volume translation has long been out of print and difficult to obtain. Moreover, in recent years the New Netherland Project, under the able direction of Charles Gehring, has uncovered new source materials and identified some problems in the work of van Laer. These problems, it should be pointed out, have less to do with translation and more to do with a lack of corroborating primary sources. In

any case, many of the problems have been corrected in this new edition, and a vitally significant record of the early settlement of the upper Hudson River region is now available to scholars in a handy one-volume format.

The translation has been improved with a new glossary of Dutch terms, a superb index with all the variant spellings of names, and dozens of explanatory footnotes which bring the latest scholarship to bear on issues raised in the text. Scholars intent on pursuing the history of the court and its place in the colonial administration of New Netherland will find the introduction and brief bibliography a useful starting point. To understand the importance of these documents a brief history of the court of Fort Orange and Beverwyck is necessary.

Although the West India Company had established Fort Orange as its northernmost outpost of the fur trade in the 1620s, it was not until midcentury that population growth and Indian war created a need for a *Kleine Bank van Justitie* (inferior court for civil and minor criminal cases) in the upper Hudson region. In response to Company orders, Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant established the court of Fort Orange and Beverwyck in 1652. Settlers in the area north of the fort were required to swear allegiance to the Company, and the municipality of Fort Orange and Beverwyck was created. The court was organized as a *Kleine Bank van Justitie*. Its sessions were conducted by the *commies*, the fort's garrison commander and chief Company official. He brought cases before the court and served as its prosecuting officer. The cases were decided by a jury of magistrates who not only rendered verdicts but also determined penalties and fines. Magistrates were appointed annually by the director general at Manhattan from a double number submitted by the townspeople.

The court met continuously (about twice monthly, excluding extraordinary sessions) from 1652 until the end of the Dutch period and under a different name until the establishment of the mayor's court of Albany in 1686. Only a fraction of the court's record has survived. The court minutes from 1661 until the English conquest in 1664 are lost as are those of the English administration from 1664 to 1668. Thus, this volume contains only eight years of minutes from the court's founding in 1652 to 1660. It presents approximately 1,586 entries that are detailed enough to determine the nature of the case before the court. There are also several hundred entries involving defaults in which one or more parties do not appear in court.

A content analysis of the 1,586 major entries in the court minutes suggests that most of the magistrates' work involved contract enforcement, the vast majority of such cases being requests for payment of debts. Some

626 such entries (about 39 percent of the total) may be classified as creditor requests for payment. Minor criminal cases (note that capital crimes were not tried before this court) comprised about 194 entries, or 12 percent of the total. Of these, approximately 82 cases involved charges of physical assault: 26 entries for knife fighting, 16 entries for brawling, and four sex crimes, including two cases of fornication, one case of child molestation, one attempted rape, and one charge of cross-dressing. The remaining 77 criminal entries concerned accusations of slander, defamation of character, and verbal assault. Some 35 cases are less easily identified because the minutes reveal too little detail. The third largest category of entries may be classified as administrative cases (approximately 180 or 11.3 percent of the total). These involved resolutions, proclamations, and the election of magistrates. Another 164 entries (10.3 percent of the total) dealt with real estate, including the granting of town lots and the adjudication of boundary disputes. Eighty-two entries touched upon the Indian trade, the majority of which were violations of the fur trade ordinance and allegations of illegal liquor trading. In addition to these, one finds entries concerning violations of municipal ordinances, the probate of estates, the publication of marriage banns, the issuance of burgher oaths, violations of various excise tax laws, the abuse of servants, one divorce granted for bigamy, and some 40 requests for arbitration.

Although this simple aggregate tabulation makes no claim to being exhaustive, it does suggest just how valuable the court minutes of Fort Orange and Beverwyck may be for social historians of the Dutch period. Scholars are thus indebted to Charles Gehring and the staff of the New Netherland Project for making these important documents once again available.

Fort Orange [N.Y.] *Court Minutes, 1652-1660*, translated and edited by Charles T. Gehring (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press 1990), cloth, xliii+591 pp., index, $75. Order from the publisher: 1600 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse NY 13244-5160.

Colonial-era court proceedings are the stuff from which local history, biography, and genealogy are assembled, and which bring life to otherwise bare vital statistics. The jurisdiction of the Fort Orange Court included the village of Beverwijck (now Albany), Schenectady, Kinderhook, Claverack, Coxsackie, Catskill, and Esopus (Kingston). Here were held the trials of civil and minor criminal cases in this predominantly Dutch area. Among the myriad human-interest cases dealt with by the magistrates were: disputes over firewood, nonpayment of debts, slander, building permits, land grants, child molestation, disturbances, brawls, fulfillment of contracts, blocking of roads, curfew violation, sales of pretzels to Indians, breach of promise, and all types of petty litigation commonly found in the records of inferior courts.

As all researchers familiar with court proceedings appreciate, editor Gehring's task was formidable. We can report that he succeeded admirably in creating an extremely readable and authoritative transcript of the difficult and often nearly illegible minutes. Occasional footnotes explain obscure terms and identities, or refer the reader to pertinent information to be found elsewhere. A useful three-page bibliography has been added to the book. The analytical index, which takes up 45 pages, covers subjects (e.g., cheese, chimneys, and church), places, occupations, types of cases (e.g., debt), and full names, and includes many cross-references (e.g., "libel; *see* slander").

This newest addition to the New Netherland Document Series should be obtained by all major genealogical libraries and students of Hudson Valley genealogy and history.

– Reviewed by G.E. Russell, Contrib. Ed.

A Man and His Ship: Peter Minuit and the Kalmar Nyckel, by C.A. Weslager (Wilmington, Del.: Kalmar Nyckel Foundation 1989), xii+225 pp., 16 page photographic insert, cloth: $20, paper: $9.95. Order from the publisher: 823 E. Seventh St., Wilmington DE 19801.

Because the Swedes and Finns who colonized the lower Delaware Valley beginning in 1638 (with the arrival of the *Kalmar Nyckel*) were so quickly assimilated into the general population, many genealogists whose quests lead them back into Pennsylvania discover an unexpected descent from a New Sweden colonist. Our public school educational system and romantic historical literature have foisted a Plymouth Rock/Jamestown Colony bias on us, and we have — belatedly — come to welcome and appreciate any authoritative and interesting account of the first settlement of New Sweden. Professor Weslager enjoys that too-rare talent: the knowledge and ability to make history readable. In *A Man and His Ship* we have a fascinating, yet thoroughly documented, account of Minuit's founding of New Sweden, picking up the story in the 1620s and continuing it into the 1640s. Liberally illustrated with maps and portraits, the book is supplemented by an appendix listing the 1640 and 1641 settlers, and by a thirteen-page index. Recommended reading for all descendants of New Sweden.

– Reviewed by G.E. Russell, Contrib. Ed.

A Guide to Norwegian Genealogical Research and Sources, by Wade Starkes (Orem, Utah, 1988), paper, 8½" x 11", plastic comb binding, 22 pp., $8.95 postpaid. Order from the author, 140 West 900 South, Orem UT 84058.

The author, who specializes in Scandinavian research, is employed by the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. This guide briefly discusses the types of Norwegian surnames, notes the value of U.S. censuses and various passenger lists for establishing immigrant origins, and suggests organizations in America which could be consulted. It then provides an explanation of Norwegian ecclesiastical and civil jurisdictions, including the contents and time period covered by each type of record. Of special interest is the mention of Bygdeboks, which give the descent of farms with their owners and operators. These are being compiled by local historians for many parishes throughout Norway.

– Reviewed by C.M. Hansen, Contrib. Editor

Gateway to the West, compiled by Ruth Bowers and Anita Short, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co. 1989), cloth, xv+972, xiii+999 pp., indexes, $150.*

Under the same title, *Gateway to the West* was a periodical edited by Bowers and Short, enjoying a decade of publication of source material from almost every Ohio county, much like *Tree Talks* is doing for New York. The material for these two volumes was selected from the "principal articles" of the journal, arranged by county, and includes abstracts of estate, vital, cemetery, land, court, and similar types of records. As to be expected, coverage is uneven. For Fulton Co. there are only death records for 1867-72, but for Montgomery Co. there are guardianships 1803-37, early deaths 1867-68, deaths reported in the *Miamisburg Bulletin* 1872-73, estates 1803-12, naturalizations 1818-33, deeds (various), Stillwater Lutheran Church baptisms 1834-49, inscriptions from ten cemeteries, and Revolutionary War soldiers' graves.

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Letters of Support

THOMAS M. WHALEN, III
MAYOR

CITY OF ALBANY
STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
12207

518-434-5100

November 6, 1991

To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter in wholehearted support for the continuation of the New York State Library's New Netherland Project. Under the capable direction of Dr. Charles Gehring, the New Netherland Project is engaged in preserving and making accessible to researchers the valuable documents of the Dutch West India Company's colony of New Netherland from the period of 1621 through 1674.

The Project has provided valuable insight into the origins of our local society and its continued research of the documents of our early colonial period is a most worthy pursuit.

I urge continued support for the New Netherland Project because of its outstanding contributions to the preservation of our proud Dutch heritage for future generations of Albanians.

Cordially,

Thomas M. Whalen, III

Historic Cherry Hill

February 19, 1992

To Whom It May Concern:

As a historic house museum interpreting five generations of one family descended from Dutch and English ancestry, Historic Cherry Hill fully supports the important work of the New Netherland Project of the New York State Library.

The influence of the Dutch throughout the Hudson Valley was significant in innumerable aspects of social history--language, foodways, commerce, religion, slave holding, class interaction, politics, etc.

Sound research serves as the foundation of all good museum programs and interpretation, and the efforts of the New Netherland Project have served as a resource for Cherry Hill and several other institutions in the region in the planning of programs and events. Continued funding for the Project is needed to continue work on the vast amount of materials available for translation and research, and for the important component of public education which the Project provides.

Sincerely,

Liselle LaFrance

Liselle LaFrance
Director

523½ South Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12202 • 518 434-4791

New York University
A private university in the public service

Faculty of Arts and Science
Department of History

19 University Place, 5th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10003
Telephone: (212) 998-8600

December 8, 1991

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to express my wholehearted support for the New Netherland Project, an invaluable contribution to scholarship as well as to all students interested in the history of early New York.

As a historian specializing in New York and the Middle Colonies, I regularly use and appreciate the importance of such basic documents as those the New Netherland Project has at last made accessible. New York's seventeenth-century history, especially that of the Dutch period, has suffered chronic distortion because official documents and local records have long remained untranslated and neglected in dusty archives.

The State of New York had the foresight to gather a group of skilled and dedicated historians, translators, and editors to undertake the crucial work of making these early documents available to scholars and interested researchers. Yet, if this vital effort is not to lag, it must be encouraged by private and other public donors. In addition to myself, my doctoral students depend heavily on the volumes currently in print. Already they have supported a revisionist dissertation on the era of the Glorious Revolution in New York, another on early Dutch family life, and ongoing studies of the Brooklyn Reformed Church and of the seventeenth-century economic transition from Dutch to English rule.

The role of the New Netherland Project in providing printed sources for such students as mine - as well as the informal assistance its staff is always ready to offer to researchers - has made the Project indispensable to the writing of early New York history. I urge that it be continued and generously supported.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia U. Bonomi

Patricia U. Bonomi
Professor of History

31

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES
Edited by Jacob Ernest Cooke
with

W. J. Eccles
Milton M. Klein
Jackson T. Main

Ramón A. Gutiérrez
Gloria L. Main
Alden Vaughan

30 November 1991

To whom it may concern/
A qui de droit.

I write in support of the New Netherland Project's proposal which is most deserving of financial support. On several occasions I have been asked by the NEH to assess applications submitted to it for funding. None in my view have deserved support more than the New Netherland Project.

Some two years ago I participated in a conference organized by the Project. It proved to be one of the best of the hundreds of conferences that I have attended during a fairly long career. While at Albany I was able to see the work that the New Netherland Project is engaged in. The calibre of the scholarship is most impressive. The result is that a vast quantity of documents that would be denied to me, as to the vast majority of American and Canadian colonial historians, are being put to our use. What is more ~~they~~ I can have complete confidence in the translation of the documents, the annotation, and the requisite scholarly apparatus. All but a very few of us have to rely on Dr Charles Gehring and his staff, whose qualifications and zeal, are most exemplary. It would, therefore, be a sad day indeed were the New Netherland Project's work to be hindered by the lack of a very modest infusion of funds; scholarship at large would suffer.

Most sincerely
W J Eccles

W.J.Eccles
Professor of History, Emeritus,
The University of Toronto

Robert S. Grumet
60-A New Street
New Hope, Pennsylvania 18938

Charles T. Gehring
Director, New Netherland Project
New York State Library
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12222

December 10, 1991

Dear Charles:

In an age of inflated and often not entirely deserved praise, I feel that one cannot write that a program is the best or most important of its type without inspiring at least some degree of skepticism. A review of the more than fifty book reviews published under my by-line over the course of the past 15 years, moreover, will clearly show that I am not exactly given to fulsome tribute or glittering commendation. Having said this, I have no trouble writing that the New Netherland Project is easily the best and most important program of its kind active today, period.

New Netherland Project publications are simply indispensable to any scholar studying the history and culture of the colonial Northeast. Ranking experts in their fields, project staff members provide critically important technical assistance to colleagues and interested lay scholars. Outreach programs presented by project staffers, such as public lectures and sponsored symposia, provide opportunities to present both latest project developments and the findings of active scholars the general public. By publishing important manuscript groups, reviewing, revising, and annotating published documents, conducting public outreach, and working closely with the scholarly community, New Netherland Project staff members represent a vital and irreplaceable resource of lasting and enduring value.

Please feel free to contact me for specific examples as needed. In the interim, please accept Eloise's and my greetings to you and Jean for a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely yours,

Robert S. Grumet, Ph.D
Ethnohistorian

Trinity College

6 Hoskin Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 1H8

25 November 1991

To Whom it May Concern:

As is generally accepted, the documents of New Netherland are essential to writing the colonial history of North America. They are basic to a full appreciation of the political, social and cultural meaning of European settlement in the continent as a whole. New Netherland history reaches well beyond the national boundaries of the United States into Ontario and the Maritime Provinces of Canada in particular. Post-Revolutionary migrations brought many New Netherland settlers into British territory, with results only now beginning to be appreciated. Settlement patterns, intermarriages and impacts on native peoples beg to be studied here as well as along the westward migration pathways in what is now the United States. "Holland on the Hudson" had reverberations much beyond the local history by which it was for too long confined.

The New Netherland Project is highly productive. I am fascinated and delighted by such recent productions as the Fort Orange Court Minutes, 1652-1660 and the volumes of Andros Papers. Even the Laws and Writs of Appeal, 1647-1663 made compulsive reading, and I would not want to miss any future volume. As a New Netherland descendant of established lineage it is of special interest to discover the facts about 'ancestral roots'. I have been greatly enlightened (and sobered) by realizing the actual conditions under which the colonists lived. But reading these volumes is not just for genealogists and family historians. There is a greater lesson to be derived from understanding the Dutch colonial assertion, new world adventuring and adaptation and finally the patterns of assimilation after 1664. A detailed model of social and cultural change can be constructed using these volumes along side the better known studies of colonial New England and Virginia. Here was a miniature replica of the Netherlands, whose people had to contend with the enormous dynamic that filled a new continent in less than three-hundred years.

As a professional editor (Co-editor of Volumes I and XII of The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell), I appreciate the ingenuity, energy and discipline going into the production of volumes from the New Netherland Project. Looking back on earlier volumes, The Kingston Papers (1976) for instance, I appreciate the improvement in editorial quality. Of course, I would like more scholarly footnoting of persons named and events recorded, but the extra research would cost money the Project seems not to have. As to the texts themselves, it is hard to see how they could be improved, although I cannot read the original Dutch. In the instance where I made careful comparisons --A. J. F. Van Laer's earlier translation of the Fort Orange Court Minutes mentioned above-- I definitely thought the new version superior: clearer and better to read. Let us first of all have the best possible translations of the original documents. That Charles Gehring and his associates are giving us these is beyond doubt. Their work is an enormous stimulus to historians to try to make sense of this remarkable cache of seventeenth century documents. I have been reading some of the new studies, especially around my special interest in Albany, New York, and recognize the extent to which The New Netherland Project is basic to them. In times of scarcity this Project should be a high priority for funding.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew Brink

Andrew Brink, Professor

Fax 416/978-2797

Dutch Family Heritage Society
2463 Ledgewood Drive
West Jordan, Utah 84084

Founded 1987

January 15, 1992

Ms. Nancy Anne M. Zeller
New Netherland Project
The New York State Library
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12230

Dear Ms. Zeller,

It is with great pleasure that I take the opportunity to write a letter in support of the New Netherland Project. As you know, I have been promoting your project throughout the West and Midwest, areas where many descendants of New Netherland families live. DFHS and all of our members who have New Netherland Dutch ancestry are very interested in the results of your project. We feel that it is important to put as much support behind the project as possible while such a dedicated and expert team is available to complete the work.

With more than fourteen million people of Dutch descent living in the United States, it is a tremendous service to these people to provide them with usable sources for research into their heritage. The New Netherland Dutch have been an almost forgotten part of our national history, which this project helps remedy.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Lynn Spijkerman Parker

Mrs. Mary Lynn Spijkerman Parker
President/Editor

DUTCH
NETWORKING SERVICES Inc.

27 December 1991

To Whom It May Concern,

It gives me great pleasure to express my deep appreciation and respect for the New Netherland Project.

Dutch Networking Services recently published The Dutch in America Orange Pages, a national directory for the Dutch in America. I contacted the New Netherland Project in order to find names and contacts connected to the Dutch in the U.S. I was looking for names of historical societies, archives, publishers of books related to Dutch topics, etc.

Dr. Gehring, and indeed his entire staff at the New Netherland Project, were not only extremely well informed, but also very willing to make the effort to share that knowledge with me. I spent some very pleasant days looking through files and I gathered a great deal of valuable information for the book. Dr. Gehring also was a great help in critiquing the article in The Dutch in America Orange Pages on the history of the Dutch in America. His meticulous eye and solid scholarship added immeasurably to the accuracy and depth of the article.

I attended the 1991 Rensselaerswijck Seminar, organized by Nancy Anne M. Zeller, assistant to Dr. Gehring. I was delighted to be exposed to such a wide variety of topics by so distinguished a panel of scholars. Their lucid explanations made for a very stimulating day even for a non-scholar like myself.

It is abundantly clear to me that the New Netherland Project's publishing and research efforts are not only valuable in and of themselves, but are also a valuable and accessible source of information to anybody interested in early Dutch history.

Sincerely,

Jacobs

Miriam Jacobs
Editor/Publisher
Dutch in America Orange Pages

P.O. BOX 68 • STOCKBRIDGE, MA 01262 • USA • 413-298-3235 • FAX 413-298-5487

Phone:
(302) 239-7794

DR. C. A. WESLAGER
Professor Emeritus-History
859 Old Public Road
Hockessin, DE 19707

November 12, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

The New Netherland Project has added depth to our understanding of American Colonial history and culture. The invaluable translations from Dutch manuscripts, thoroughly annotated, have enabled teachers to give students a full perspective of the emergence of the New World colonies – particularly New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.

In lectures to historical societies, as well as church and civic groups – and in the 25 books I have written – my aim has also been to bring America's beginnings into sharp focus, as well as to highlight the dramatic role played by New Netherland, a dominant and influential component.

The limited, but highly efficient staff, of the New Netherland Project has displayed outstanding professional competence under the leadership fo Dr. Charles T. Gehring. His unique qualifications for the difficult task of translating old Dutch script into modern English is recognized internationally.

Much more remains to be found in the literary treasure-trove of untranslated Dutch documents. It is important to make this material available to historians and teachers in many disciplines. The momentum of the current research should not be allowed to waver. It is too valuable to be delayed due to lack of funds. Physical facilities and skilled personnel are available to make new data available in a comprehensive format to institutional and public libraries. I fully support this important Project.

C.A. Weslager

C.A. Weslager
Formerly associated with Wesley College,
the University of Delaware, and
Brandywine College of Widener University

COLUMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 13, 1992

RE: The New Netherland Project
FROM: Sharon S. Palmer, Acting Executive Director

The translation and publication of colonial Dutch records by the New Netherland Project has been an effort of inestimable value to academic and amateur historians alike. What were once inaccessible manuscript resources have now become the balancing force in the interpretation of the Dutch impact upon colonial New York history. Historians no longer rely solely upon English sources. The New Netherland Project is the only effort in fifty or more years to bring to the academic world and to the general public information about Dutch settlement and development in America. The Project will also help to define the impact of colonial New York upon the other colonies.

The Rensselaerswijck Seminars have made available to historians the most recent research in several areas of Dutch culture. The compilation of selected papers from the first ten seminars, A Beautiful and Fruitful Place, became an invaluable source of information to our organization. Publications resulting from the New Netherland Project have enhanced our own research into the history of Dutch settlement in Columbia County.

The Columbia County Historical Society presents colonial Dutch life and culture in the interpretation of the Luykas Van Alen House, an early 18th-century restoration house museum. Information uncovered by the New Netherland Project staff has been immediately incorporated into our interpretive tours for several hundred annual visitors. All efforts combine to expand our knowledge of colonial Columbia County, its residents, and their way of life. In addition, New Netherland Project staff are often available to offer suggestions, answer questions, and help with translations.

It is a personal and professional pleasure to work with the results of the New Netherland Project. The Project provides primary source materials of vital importance to our understanding of colonial New York history.

Sharon S. Palmer

THE COLUMBIA COUNTY MUSEUM c.1916
Luykas Van Alen House c.1737 • James Vanderpoel House c.1820 • Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse c.1850-1920
5 Albany Avenue, PO Box 311, Kinderhook, New York 12106 518-758-9265

Department of Africana Studies

November 5, 1991

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter strongly and enthusiastically supports the continuation of the New Netherland Project.

For the past eleven years I have been engaged in trying to research the history of African slaves in the early Dutch colony of New Netherland. From the beginning, the most valuable source of documentation and information has been and continues to be the New Netherland Project. I have acquired a rich collection of documents that have been recently translated by the New Nethterland Project. I hope that the publication of my bookthat is presently in preparation will add significantly to the literature on the subject of slavery in the colonial period.

Dr. Gehring has been the pivotal force in my research. In addition to having provided me with many documents, he has also guided me to sources in archives in other locations in the United States as well as in Europe and the Caribbean. Two most important works are the Journal of Alexander Coventry and the Narrative of John Stedman. These two primary source volumes provide more detailed information about slavery under the Dutch in the 18th century than any other.

Many of my colleagues depend on the New Netherland as a primary source of information on the history of New Netherland and early New York.

I totally support the efforts of the New Nethrland Project and the continuation of those efforts. I am a member of the Friendsof the New Netherland Project and will continue my support in any and every way possible.

Sincerely,

Willie F. Page

Willie F. Page. Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Brooklyn College of The City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210 212 780-5597

Charlotte Wilcoxen
Nine Chauncy Street
Apartment 33
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
(617) 354-8590

November 6, 1991

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Of the programs innaugurated within recent years by the New York State Library for the benefit of its public, none seems to me more deserving of unstinting support than the New Netherland Project. From its beginnings, the work of Dr. Charles Gehring and his staff has been a decisive factor in making scholars and the general public alike aware of the unique contribution the Dutch made to the settlement of America and the molding of its political, economic and cultural institutions -- matters that had been deplorably ignored by all but a few American historians for three hundred years, largely because they were unable to make use of the excellent records left by the Dutch.

The New Netherland Project, in carrying out the difficult work of transcribing and translating the gothic handwriting of seventeenth-century Dutch, and then publicizing and publishing this material in a series of annotated volumes, has opened a new field to both historians and the academic community. The result has been an impressive body of literature about the Dutch in America that accumulates each year. In the Netherlands, too, scholars are making use of these documents of their own history that they had not known existed.

As a personal note, I can say that without the work of the New Netherland Project, I could not have written the two books that I have published on aspects of the Dutch presence in seventeenth-century America. Thus, like many others involved in historical research and publication, I am deeply concerned that generous support be given the New Netherland Project toward the continuation of its work of documenting and interpreting the extensive Dutch role in shaping America's colonial history.

Very sincerely yours,

Charlotte Wilcoxen

Charlotte Wilcoxen

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Department of African American Studies
Faculty of Arts and Letters
732 Clemens
Buffalo, New York 14260
(716) 636-2082

6 November 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

The New Netherland Project has an outstanding record of achievement and service to the scholarly community in New York State, the United States, and the world through its various seminars, research guides, translations and other publications.

The longstanding quality of the project's work shows clearly in its recently published A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers, edited by Nancy Anne McClure Zeller and introduced by Charles T. Gehring. The 31 essays in the 400-page complication of selected papers from the project's first ten seminars (1979-1987) illustrate the breadth and depth of the project's work and the array of distinguished scholars who have contributed to, and benefitted from, the project. Further, publications such as the several volume of the New York Historical Manuscripts or A Guide to Dutch Manuscripts Relating to New Netherland in United States Repositories extend the project's reach to the full range of scholars interested in diverse topics related to colonial development.

The project's outreach programs, such as the Rensselaerswijck Seminars, draw not only scholars but an interested and knowledgeable general audience. Indeed, through its Friends' program and notes, the project has connected a wide range of individuals and local institutions--including libraries, museums, and heritage groups.

In sum, the project has become a central resource to a local, regional, and international community. While less publicized than better known centers in Philadelphia, Dover, or Williamsburg, the New Netherland Project has earned a place in the same class of research centers through work of consistently high quality and remarkable quantity. Yet the project's notable efficiency has always been overshadowed by the personableness of the director and staff. The New Netherland Project has always been people centered. It is a place to work where people, such as director Charles Gehring, are themselves valuable resources.

The project is a bargain by any analysis. It ranks as one of the most effective public history programs in the United States, and funding it is a worthwhile investment to explaining the past and understanding the present.

Sincerely,

Thomas Joseph Davis

Thomas Joseph Davis, Ph.D.
Professor

State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
4 NORTH BROAD STREET
CN 305
TRENTON, NJ 08625
(609) 292-6062 FAX (609) 633-8168

JOAN HABERLE
SECRETARY OF STATE

BERNARD BUSH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 6, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the New Netherland Project's efforts to translate and edit for publication the Dutch documents in the New Netherland Archives at the New York State Library. This is, in my opinion, one of the most important translation projects in progress in the field of American Colonial History.

The Dutch colonial experience in North America has not been studied as extensively or intensively as those of the English, the French, or the Spaniards. Those historians working in the field have had to rely on old, and often inaccurate, translations done in the mid-nineteenth century by E. B. O'Callaghan and around the turn of the century by A. J. F. van Laer. There hasn't been a project of this magnitude to translate the remaining Dutch documents in the past fifty years.

These documents have been inaccessible to the modern scholar, not only because they were written in an archaic, seventeenth-century Dutch language, but also because the perculiar Dutch script in which they were written must be deciphered also. No one in America is more qualified to do this than Dr. Charles T. Gehring of the New Netherland Project. His doctoral dissertation at Indiana University deals with the structural changes in the Dutch language in America that occurred after the English Conquest. His superb translations of the land papers, the Delaware papers, the council minutes, the Fort Orange court minutes, the laws and writs of appeal, the Curacao papers, and the Andros papers have demonstrated not only his unique language skills in seventeenth century Dutch, but also his thorough knowledge of Dutch culture essential for the more subtle aspects of accurate annotation.

The New Netherland Project already has resulted in significant new scholarship, as a whole crop of new books, articles, and dissertations based on these new translations constitute a rewriting of the history of New Netherland and the significance of the Dutch in Colonial American History. The continuation of the New Netherland Project will undoubtedly continue to yield invaluable information for historians, folklorists, anthropologists, archeologists, and the general public. I know that I have found it to be invaluable in my own work.

Sincerely,

David S. Cohen
Senior Research Associate

42

122 East 58th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

18 November 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

As editor of de Halve Maen, a quarterly magazine devoted to scholarly articles on the Dutch colonial period in America and published by the Holland Society of New York, I enthusiastically support the work of the New Netherland Project. The Project's publications which have already appeared in print have greatly contributed to the knowledge of a formative period in American history, and have won wide acclaim from both European and American scholars. Future volumes will surely provide scholars and students, as well as laymen, with a wealth of documents largely inaccessible in the past. If the Project's previous work is an indication, these future volumes will continue to improve our understanding of America's political, social, and cultural origins.

Any contribution made to the New Netherland Project is an investment in the future of American scholarship.

Sincerely,

David William Voorhees
Editor
de Halve Maen

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
REFERENCE BOOKS

866 Third Avenue • New York, N.Y. 10022

15 November 1991

Re: The New Netherland Project
From: David Bain, Managing editor, Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies

The New Netherland Project, through its energetic director, Charles Gehring, has been an invaluable resource in our task of ensuring that Scribners' Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies (expected date of publication 1992) live up to its title and attendant responsibility. If the New Netherland Project had not existed as a nucleus of research, and Dr. Gehring not been presiding intellectually over a small but exceedingly active field of inquiry, our 21st-century audience would be receiving an unnecessarily skewed perspective on the American past and the American heritage. We, too, would have been unwitting heirs to the historical, and even linguistic, tendency to diminish or dismiss everything Dutch-American as "peculiar," rather than to learn to recognize in our colonial past the marks of a vastly accomplished and comparatively enlightened world-colonizing culture.

What our Encyclopedia greatly needed--framebreaking perspective combined with groundbreaking research--has come to us in timely installments care of Director Gehring: all of his editorial labors free of charge, we might add. (Our own project, as he knows, operates on a relative shoestring as well.) As special consultant to our editorial board, Dr. Gehring has helped us reshape the table of contents, introduced us to just the right scholarly talent (and fire) for each job, and reviewed and commented on all resulting essays. Whatever degree of world perspective we have introduced into our continentally scoped volumes will be due, in large part, to Director Gehring's efforts and the standing resources of the New Netherland Project.

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44

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT ONEONTA
ONEONTA, NEW YORK 13820

Department of Anthropology
Telephone (607) 431–3345

20 November 1991

To whom it may concern:

This letter supports the continuation and funding of the New Netherland Project at the New York State Library.

The compilation and translation of the extant Dutch manuscripts pertaining to the Dutch administration in eastern North America and the attendant trade is an important task that must be completed. With few exceptions, these documents represent the earliest record of historical events in the region. They provide significant insights into not only the sociopolitical and socioeconomic activities of the Dutch in New Netherland, but importantly, they furnish detailed first glimpses into native lifeways. The documents provide indispensable information useful for historians, ethnologists, archaeologists, and ethnohistorians concerned with the issues of social history, culture change, acculturation, and other comparative studies.

I am personally acquainted with some 20 scholars who are actively involved in one or more of the research areas I have outlined above and who have used extensively Dutch materials that have been made available by the New Netherland Project and its impressive list of publications. My own work on frontiers and trade in the seventeenth century has benefitted from having access to these data.

I strongly recommend that the project be funded and supported to the maximum extent possible. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

William A. Starna

William A. Starna
Professor

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, N.Y. 12230

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM
HISTORICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEYS

January 7, 1992

To Whom It May Concern:

The work of the New Netherland Project, sponsored by the New York State Library and directed by Dr. Charles Gehring, Dutch Translator, is of inestimable value to persons interested in the European colonization and early history of northeastern North America. The translation and re-translation of old Dutch manuscripts is an important service, not only to students of American history, but also to anthropologists who rely on early European accounts for information on American Indian cultures in their pristine state. Much of what we know about the Indians of the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys is derived from Dutch documents of the 17th century.

The staff of the New Netherland Project are capable scholars who deserve support that will enable them to continue their important contributions to historical and anthropological research.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Funk

Robert E. Funk
State Archeologist

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Department of History
129 Dickinson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544-1017
December 31, 1991

To Whom it May Concern:

I write in support of the New Netherland Project of the New York State Archives in its continuing quest for adequate financial support.

The Project has a well deserved reputation for excellence among historians of the United States and has made its mark internationally as well, particularly in the Netherlands and Britain.

Speaking for myself, I have been tremendously impressed by the pace and quality of publication that Charles T. Gehring and his staff have been able to maintain in an era of limited state budgets. Working closely with the Holland Society of New York, they are well along the way to making available, in English translation, all of the surviving Dutch records of New Netherland and seventeenth-century New York, as well as many English records, such as the first two volumes of The Andros Papers (Edmund Andros was proprietary governor from 1674-80), both published quite recently.

The Project also sponsors an annual Rensselaerswyck Seminar on some topic relevant to seventeenth-century history. When I participated in 1989, the theme was Jacob Leisler's Rebellion of 1689, New York's counterpart to England's Glorious Revolution. My own contribution aside, I found the level and intensity of discussion to be most impressive, and I was particularly taken by the ability of the participants to engage the broader public, about a hundred of whom turned out for the occasion.

The New Netherland Project has been doing outstanding work at least since the mid-1970s, when I first became aware of what it was trying to accomplish. Above all it is making major sources available to a much broader constituency of users, both academic and popular. These efforts have my strongest support.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Murrin
Professor

STICHTING JOHN ADAMS INSTITUUT

Mr. Charles Gehring
New Netherland Project
New York State Library
C.E.C. 8th Floor
Albany NY 12230
USA

Amsterdam, February 12 1992
Re: 92.007/bg

Dear Mr. Gehring,

I am writing to express my support of the New Netherland Project. The project needs to be brought to the attention of people in the Netherlands.

The John Adams Instituut, a non-profit organization, was set up to encourage historical and cultural understanding between the United States and the Netherlands. The institute's offices are located in the West-Indisch Huis, the former headquarters of the West India Company and the place where New Amsterdam (later New York) was born. The Foundation Het West-Indisch Huis, in conjunction with the Dutch American West India Company Foundation, founded the John Adams Instituut in 1987.

You and your staff have been involved in the seminal research of the Dutch history of New York since the start of the New Netherland Project in 1974. On our side of the Atlantic, the Amsterdam Historical Museum organized the well-known "Birth of New York" exhibition in the Bicentennial year. The John Adams Instituut will do its utmost to help promote the work of the New Netherland Project here in Holland. For example, the institute is planning a symposium for 1993, "New Netherland : A Colonial Heritage", where aspects of Dutch culture and society such as architecture, women's rights, care of the poor, cooking and literature will be presented.

./2

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STICHTING JOHN ADAMS INSTITUUT

Since 1982, a regular exchange between Dutch and American historians has taken place. But more can be done. For instance, we would strongly recommend that the John Adams Chair, newly established by the Fulbright organization, be given to an historian from the New Netherland Project to further Dutch and American historical and cultural relations.

Let me once again express my full support of the unique New Netherlands Project. Under the proper auspices, the project will contribute valuable knowledge to the mutual understanding between the United States and the Netherlands.

Sincerely,
JOHN ADAMS INSTITUUT

Anne Wertheim
director

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

FACULTEIT DER LETTEREN

21.11.91

To Whom It May Concern:

In September 1991 Dutch historians started a new research project on the social and cultural history of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. The history departments of all Dutch universities will cooperate in this project, which in its first stage will produce about twenty detailed monographs on the specific culture of a given social group or regional society. One of those twenty shall deal with Dutch colonial society in North America.

I mention this to show that Dutch historians are aware of the significance of this brief colonial episode, and appreciate very much the support and cooperation of their American colleagues. The New Netherland Project is one of the principal means of promoting this cooperation, because it opens up the Dutch sources for international and especially American research.

When I visited the office of the New Netherland Project at Albany, I was much impressed by the dedication and competence of all the contributors. They have produced already a large number of volumes, each of them absolutely indispensable for all those who want to study the seventeenth-century society of the colonial period.

It would be a serious blow for all American and Dutch historians interested in that period, if the New Netherland Project were to stop or even have to limit its activities for such a deplorable reason as lack of funds.

A.Th. van Deursen
Professor of Modern History
Vrije Universiteit/Amsterdam

A.Th. van Deursen

50

De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam - Postbus 7161, 1007 MC Amsterdam - Tel. 020 - 5489111

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8001 BE Zwolle.

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NEW NETHERLAND PROJECT
New York State Library
CEC 8th Floor
ALBANY, NY 12230
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Zwolle, 3 februari 1992

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear friends,

Almost a decade has gone by since I first learnt about the existence of the New Netherland Project. Throughout the years, as a Dutch student of New Netherland history, I have intensely appreciated the work of the Project, which is outstanding in its field.
Without the transcriptions and translations of the valuable sources of the history of New Netherland the Project is providing, no serious study of this fascinating part of our Dutch and American past is possible. The sources unveiled by the Project enrichen our understanding of how the Dutch were of central importance among the first nations that settled the North-American mainland. Both in the United States and the Netherlands the Dutch traditionally have been denied this role in official historiography, partly because the sources to correct one-sided views remained largely untapped.
Apart from this, the New Netherland Project serves as a centre for the study of the Dutch-American colonial experience. The succesful series of Rensselaerswijck seminars are proof of its vital importance in this field.

Sincerely yours,

drs. Jan Folkerts

[archivist at the State Archives in Overijssel, Netherlands]

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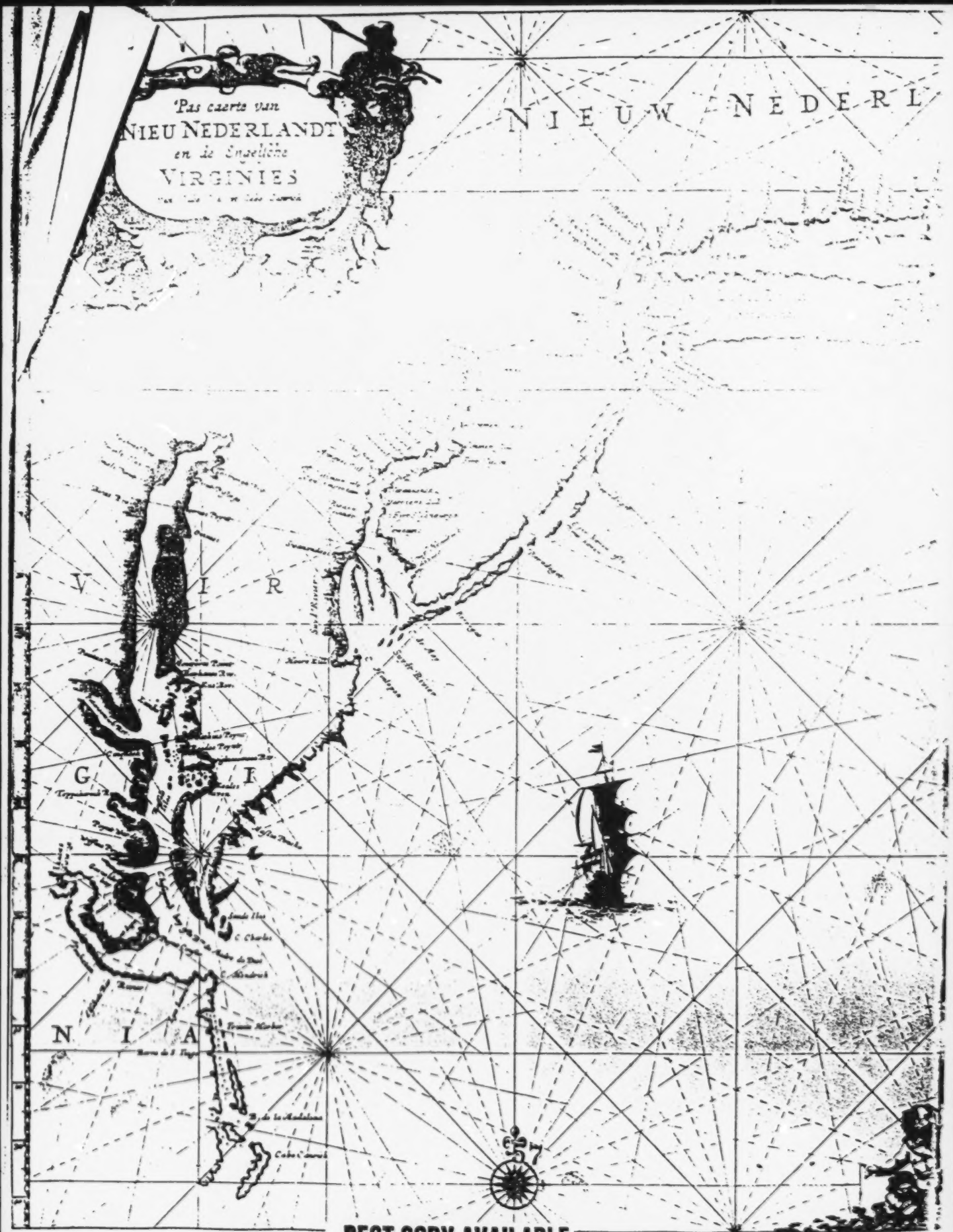

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